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The Week

BETTING on the election is light, but what there is favors Mr. Hoover, by odds of about three to one. A Republican victory is also indicated by the various straw votes which are in progress, and especially by the most elaborate of these, that of the Literary Digest. In the issue of October 13, nearly 2,000,000 ballots were tabulated, of which 63 percent were for Hoover, 36 percent for Smith, and 1 percent for the other candidates. Of the forty states tabulated, Hoover led in thirty-seven. The Democrats insist, however, that the Literary Digest poll is less than fair to their candidate. They argue that the ballots are sent to lists of names, representing in some cases automobile owners or telephone subscribers, and that therefore there is a class element in the selection, militating against the people with whom Governor Smith is most popular. It is also suggested that, even when the entire group of registered voters in a city is queried, replies are more likely to be received from the middle class, which is generally supporting Hoover, than from working men and women. In support of this theory Mr. Fabian Franklin brings forward some statistical evidence. The Literary Digest poll of 1924 was strikingly accurate, but Mr. Franklin points out that this accuracy was achieved because two grave errors offset each other: the La Follette vote was predicted as being far too high, the Davis vote far too low. Mr. Franklin has looked up the predictions state by state in 1924, and compared them with the Democratic vote in those states that year. He declares that if the disproportion between prediction and fact remains the same in 1928, the present figures indicate that Smith will carry New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Illinois by heavy majorities. This would certainly mean, at the least, that he would have a good chance of being elected. Dr. Franklin makes no attempt to say whether the disproportion between forecast and fact will be as large this year as in 1924, and agrees that it is a large If.

ON HOOVER'S Boston speech, so far as it concerns immediate tariff policy, we comment in a longer editorial in this issue. But another aspect of his remarks should not be overlooked. His argument for the necessity and beneficence of foreign trade is that American industry, in improving its efficiency, has become able to turn out so much that it cannot sell its whole output at home, and so must seek markets abroad. This sounds strangely like the discredited mercantilist economics of the eighteenth century. Any self-contained economic community should consume all it can produce—provided its productive resources are directed in the proper channels and its income is equitably distributed. The reason for foreign trade is exactly the same as the reason for domestic trade—that no economic community is wholly self-contained. It can produce some things better than others; these it finds it profitable to exchange for the kinds of goods which other communities can produce better. Protective tariffs are theoretically aimed at forcing communities to be more self-contained than they otherwise would be, by encouraging domestic manufacture of articles

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which otherwise would be bought abroad. In so far as they are effective, they necessarily exert a restrictive influence on foreign trade. Mr. Hoover's demonstration that our foreign trade has increased since the passage of the high Fordney-McCumber duties does not prove that foreign trade would not have increased more without those duties. In so far as the tariff has not interfered with foreign trade, it has been ineffective. The practical fact is, of course, that our exports have been boosted principally by the large sums of capital we have lent abroad in the past few years.

THE English press seems unanimous in believing that the Anglo-French naval agreement is dead, at least as a basis for negotiations at the next meeting of the League Commission on Limitation of Armament. Two highly important questions remain to be answered, however. The British government agreed that the French might have as many trained reservists as they pleased, and that these need not be regarded as technically a part of their military strength. Does this agreement stand, or does it not? If it does, all hope of reducing land armament on the Continent must be brushed aside, and Germany, with her army limited by the Treaty of Versailles to a mere police force, must continue to look across the Rhine at a huge force of trained men who could be mobilized almost as quickly as though they were still in barracks. Second, the British government, as the Paris correspondent of the Manchester Guardian points out, has "suddenly and incomprehensibly lost its fear of the powerful and increasing French cruiser squadrons, submarines and aircraft. . . . In small cruisers and submarines, France was given a free hand to build; in the formidable 10,000-ton cruisers and ocean-going submarines France was accorded the principle of parity." The Guardian correspondent asks, with reason, "that attitude toward the French navy having been taken, can it now be reversed? The principle of parity having been conceded, can it be withdrawn?" There is only one way to answer these questions. When the text of the agreement and the preliminary correspondence are made public by the British government, there should certainly be a definite repudiation of the promises made to France. If there is none, it will be fair to assume that these promises remain in force, and that they constitute little less than an entente which is as much a betrayal of the League as it is a menace to the peace of Europe.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK, the forty-one-year-old commander-in-chief of the army, has been made president of the Nationalist government of China. The development was not unexpected; Chiang is the strongest individual in the Nationalist group, and his prestige has been greatly enhanced by the successful culmination of the Peking campaign. In the past, he has been suspected of wishing to make himself another military dictator, and some of his actions seemed to justify this belief. Fifteen months ago he was forced to resign all his posts, and spend some time in retirement, and his career appeared to be ended. His return to power has been as dramatic and complete as anyone could wish. Today, the position of the Nationalists is so altered that there seems little immediate likelihood of a dictatorship by Chiang or anyone else. With full *de jure* recognition granted by the United States, with the Nanking incident settled with all the foreign powers involved except Japan, and with the animosity created by the Tsinan affair somewhat abated, the Chinese skies are clearer than at any time in the recent past.

OF CHINA'S population of something like 400,000,000, the overwhelming majority are unable to read or write, and their illiteracy is of course an important factor in creating the miserable conditions under which most of them live. In the last few years, a movement has sprung up in that country which has for its purpose, foolhardy as it may seem, the abolition of illiteracy among 200,000,000 persons in one generation. This goal, to be sure, may not be attained, but the results already achieved indicate that the effort is one of the most important things that ever happened in China. The difficulty of the task may be appreciated better when one remembers that there are two languages in China. One of these, the written, is the exclusive property of the educated classes; the other is the spoken, which is, of course, used by all. These tongues differ as much as do Latin and English. Before the mass-education movement could begin, it had to create the means for setting down the vernacular on paper. Many thousands of word-characters (there are 40,000 in all) were scanned, and a list was made of the 2,500 deemed most necessary, among which the first 1,200 were printed in four little "readers" which sell in China for five cents. From these, many thousands of children and adults are learning the magic secret of type which opens all locked doors. In some districts, civil war has caused all other educational effort to stop, and in every part of the country, before this movement began, the facilities were pitifully inadequate to the need: there are 65,000,000 children and 233,000 teachers in all China. The man who has worked the magic which has already meant so much and seems likely to mean so much more, Mr. Y. C. James Yen, will be the guest of honor at a public dinner in New York City next week; and at this moment we can think of nobody in the wide world who any more richly deserves such an honor.

THE voyage of the Graf Zeppelin is a fine achievement, but it is also one with some discouraging aspects about it. The weather conditions the

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dirigible encountered were in no serious sense unusual; the voyage was carefully planned, and was postponed until what seemed the most auspicious moment. Yet the passengers were forced to spend 110 hours in the air, their lives were in grave danger, they lived in cramped, uncomfortable quarters and had to guard rigorously day and night against the danger of fire. The large sums they paid for passage did not meet the expenses of the trip. It would be folly to say that transatlantic travel by airship will not eventually be commercially practicable, and perhaps this will come about in the not distant future; but it would be equally unwise to argue that the time has yet arrived.

THE latest series of deaths from alcoholic poisoning in New York City ran true to form. More than thirty people were killed in a few days' time, of whom twenty-five had drunk wood alcohol, and the other five represented the normal, year-in and year-out number of those who consume non-poisonous alcohol but do so in excess. About one hundred others required hospital care, and many of these will be permanently injured by their experience. The authorities insist that the alcohol which did such deadly work had not been denatured by the government, but came from private sources; Dr. Lewis H. Marks, president of the Industrial Alcohol Institute, states that, contrary to the general opinion, "only a fraction of 1 percent" of the government-poisoned alcohol gets into the hands of the bootleggers. As is usually the case, those killed were poor men, who could pay only a few cents for a glass of whiskey. Those wealthy enough to pay high prices are assured a much superior quality of goods, though even these are not invariably safe: investigators for the New York Telegram went last week to twenty-three high-grade speakeasies and bought liquor, which in eight cases proved to be poisonous if taken in more than small quantities.

The Coolidge Blight

THE Republican party is, without knowing it, clearly suffering from an intellectual and moral blight. The only effort of which either its leaders or rank and file seem capable is something which may be described literally as the mobilization of inertia. It is fully capable, to be sure, of raising enough money and organizing with enough efficiency to poll its actual vote. It is no less capable than formerly of going through the motions of a campaign, of getting up public meetings, of supplying them with the usual number of glib speakers and the usual amount of plausible propaganda. It is still capable of exploiting the strategic advantage of its position and of quietly profiting by, without expressly cultivating, the racial animosities, the religious and moral prejudices, the social snobbery and the class interests of different sections of the American people. But its political stock in trade has come to consist exclusively of provoking mechanical popular responses to a few sacred phrases, and of avoiding as it would the devil any effort to give to those phrases a fresh and a living meaning. The party leaders' ideas are beyond precedent rigid and stereotyped. Their methods are mechanistic and lifeless. Their success, if they succeed, will represent a triumph only for blind mass momentum. The party, as it has functioned during the campaign, is a consummate example of an organized mob.

Prosperity as a Republican monopoly is, of course, the magnet which is intended to bring the voters trooping to Hoover. No doubt the word itself corresponds to a reality which voters have good reason to seek and to value. But as the Republicans flourish it, the word has ceased to correspond to any measurable economic process or any discriminated state of facts. The "prosperity" which they are verbally exploiting is, like the star or the crowing cock which a party places as its emblem at the head of the ballot, nothing but a magic symbol of a satisfied self-interest. According to the Republican speakers, prosperity prevails in the country only as a function of Republicanism. In so far as it prevails, the Republican party and the protective tariff are entirely responsible for it. Substitute any other for the Republican party and it would cease to prevail. Alter the protective tariff in any way except to increase the duties and it would come to an end. If there are any flaws in prosperity, it is either because the protective duties are not high enough or because of conditions which a Republican government cannot be expected to control. The Republicans are responsible for the conditions which produce prosperity. They are not responsible for conditions which may interfere with it. They are entitled to all the credit. They are exempt from all the blame.

In the case of other issues they adopt a no less complacent and arrogant attitude. As regards prohibition, for instance, they are pretending loyalty to a word while refusing to consider or discuss what the word means in the life of the American people. By reaffirming loyalty to the word they soothe the prohibitionists and capitalize the impotence of the anti-prohibitionists to dig deep enough into the Constitution to disinter the rotting body of prohibition. By ignoring their own failure to give reality to the word, they satisfy the needs of the leading members of their own party, who support the law but would detest its enforcement. With prohibition as with prosperity they maintain their position by cultivating ignorance and evading controversy. They discredit Governor Smith for his proposal to change the law. But they hold themselves blameless for their failure to enforce it. The Republican policies are comparable to rocks which are as irresistible as an avalanche when they move and as unassailable as Gibraltar when they stand still. There are no

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scales with which to weigh them and the standards by which they are measurable work only in their favor.

The Republican campaign consists of a glorification of party complacency as the chief reason for national complacency. Their leaders behave as if they ruled by virtue of some kind of divine election. They do not assume the position of a partisan government which has tried out doubtful policies and is aware of any obligation to improve upon their record. From their point of view they are the only valid interpreters of the American Mood. Mr. Hoover's speeches are the deliverances of a court of final resort. He talks like a judge who is handing down decisions and expounding the rule of reason rather than a presidential candidate who is arguing contentious issues and adopting necessarily questionable attitudes. He does not have to answer criticisms. He will not verbally admit the existence of a spluttering Democratic party or of an obstreperous but insignificant Democratic candidate. The Republican candidate and party embody the incorrigible order of the American political universe. Opponents, critics, or even people who challenge facts and ask questions are victims of perverse error and frivolous illusion. Magisterial silence is the appropriate answer to their squawks and burbles. Mr. Hoover rides like Apollo across the political sky toward the goal of destiny in lonely grandeur.

There is one peculiarly significant consequence of this apotheosis of inertia. When by the personal aberration of some official, the Republicans undertake a promising but experimental political enterprise, they do not recognize it themselves and are shy about claiming any collective credit for it. Take, for instance, Mr. Coolidge's recent policy toward Mexico. The most disastrous crime which the United States could commit in its international policy would be to extend by force its economy, its culture and its power south of the Rio Grande. On the other hand, the most complete vindication of the human promise of American civilization would be a national policy toward Mexico which generously recognized the right and ability of the Mexican people to a government and a civilization of their own. An ideal of this kind is implied by the policy of the existing American ambassador to Mexico, Mr. Dwight Morrow, and for the trial of this policy Mr. Coolidge must divide the credit with his agent, who is also his friend. But has Mr. Hoover or, so far as we know, any other Republican speaker, pointed to it as a creditable episode in the Republican record? Not to our knowledge. There is no way in which it can be fitted into the slogans of Prosperity, Protection, Prohibition and All Power to the Power Companies. In the same way, a Republican Secretary of State has recently proposed to the governments of the world an anti-war treaty which Mr. Coolidge has characterized with his usual reticence as the greatest contribution to the organization of international peace which the world has ever witnessed. But have Mr. Hoover or Senator Curtis or Congressman Longworth or the other Republican campaigners emphasized this radical enterprise on the part of a Republican administration as an important revelation of Republicanism? Not they. They are too much puffed up with standing righteously pat and glorifying inertia to find cause for self-satisfaction in their own rare experiments in progressive and humane policy.

In the title to this article we have called the existing state of mind of the Republican candidate and party the Coolidge Blight. Probably this is not entirely fair to Mr. Coolidge. Most of the leaders of the party and a majority of its rank and file share the state of mind with Mr. Coolidge and are no less responsible for it. It is the inexorable result of the effective control of the party by organized big business, whose apologists are trying to justify the increasing mechanizing of industry, politics and society for the benefit of the owners of the machines, by repeating the shibboleths of American pioneer, individualist democracy. Mr. Hughes, Mr. Hoover and others lend themselves to it no less than Mr. Coolidge. They cannot help it. They are committed, willy-nilly, to the undervaluation of purposive human effort, to the worship of mechanical processes not only in industry but in politics and social life, and to the confusion of inert mass momentum with conscious moral and social progress. The propagandists for a system which pretends to be so much better than it actually is cannot avoid the ignoring of uncongenial facts, the disparagement of candid self-examination and the dependence for its popular appeals on obscure magical words. President Coolidge himself has, however, been the chief spokesman of his party during the past four years, and it is during that period that it has become unequivocally committed to Mellonism. He has been more sedulous, more conspicuous and more successful than any other Republican leader in fastening on the Republican party the resulting moral and mental stagnation. His peculiar success in this respect is born of his complete sincerity. He does not know the difference between the complacency, obscurity and self-deception which pervade his own mind and the shining from above of a great light. During his five years as President he has labored ceaselessly to reconcile the Republican party to it. By his success he has discouraged any tendency toward individuality and initiative on the part of Republican leaders. With a few exceptions, positions of power have passed to mediocrities and time-servers or else to rebels like Borah and Norris. Some of these rebels for their own reasons are now campaigning for Hoover, but after the election they will reassert their independence. In order to keep their self-respect they will have to escape the influence of the Coolidge Blight.

If Mr. Hoover does succeed Mr. Coolidge, he will inherit a troublesome enterprise. A political

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party in a semi-free country is composed of human beings with irrepressible impulses towards vagrancy, insubordination and purposive moral and intellectual effort. Once the pressure of the national election is relaxed, its members will squirm more than ever to escape from the compulsion, the tedium and the lack of enterprise of the Republican mass movement. Neither Harding nor Coolidge obtained much obedience or even consideration from their party associates in Congress. Mr. Hoover will obtain even less. This insubordination has not embarrassed Mr. Coolidge very much. He was just as well satisfied with an inert body which did not move, as he was with an inert body which moved but could not see where it was going. But Mr. Hoover's state of mind and situation are different. He is himself a dynamic man who would like to start movements of his own. He is still enough of an engineer to wish to measure and in part to account for the existing movement of American industry and society. If and when that time comes, the Coolidge Blight will count as his greatest handicap. He will receive very little support and encouragement from the regular members of his party. They can always agree not to do anything, but they almost always disagree about what to do. The Harding and Coolidge regimes have habituated them to act from political compulsion or not to act at all. The Coolidge Blight has accustomed them to depend more than politicians usually do upon meaningless verbal or mechanical stimulation for the motives of their conduct, and Mr. Hoover, if and when he appeals to other and better motives, will have to seek the aid of his present opponents rather than his present supporters.

Taking the Tariff out of Politics

EVERY four years, the protective tariff becomes a live issue in politics. Election eve approaches. Something must be done to nail down doubtful voters. Funds, quickly collected, and in large quantities, are needed. Republican strategists have often in the past applied the old reliable family nostrum to both these needs at once. A concerted attempt is made to throw a fright into the electorate by stating that prosperity depends upon protection, and that the Democrats are the enemies of protection. Visions of balance sheets in the red and of idle mills are invoked. And, at the same time, the hat is passed among the manufacturing beneficiaries of the tariff, usually with the promise, express or implied, that if they "come across" sufficiently to return the party to power, they will receive their reward in another upward revision.

It was evident, early in the present campaign, that the Republican managers were laying their wires to spring the same old trap. Herbert Hoover himself gave early encouragement to the tariff issue. But the Democrats, having been caught before, were wary and would not play the game. The only opportunity they gave their opponents was Smith's incautious reference to (but not endorsement of) the Underwood tariff bill in his speech of acceptance. Not dismayed by the lack of any real Democratic threat to the tariff, the Republican managers cheerfully went ahead to invent one. And so Governor Smith, in his Louisville speech, made another try to get the tariff out of politics.

This speech, in attempting to allay the fear that the Democrats would be "bad for business," ought to be one of the most effective of the campaign. On its detailed arguments concerning the incidence of depression under Republican as well as under Democratic administrations, concerning the depression that exists now in our three greatest industries—agriculture, coal mining and textiles—concerning the origin of present high wages under Wilson rather than under Coolidge, and concerning the greatest contribution yet made by any party to business stability—the Federal Reserve System, which was brought into being during Wilson's first administration in spite of the hostility of the Republicans—on these points the meaning of the speech is obvious. But the significance of Smith's program on the tariff itself, as contrasted with Hoover's, should be emphasized.

Superficially, there might seem to be ground for each of two contradictory comments on the speech from Republican quarters. One is, that on the tariff the Democrats have surrendered to the Republican protective position, and that if one is to vote for a protectionist, one might as well vote for a good one rather than a recent convert. The other is, that Smith does not really mean what he says, and that, in spite of everything, the Democrats will injure business by revising the tariff downward. As a matter of fact, both comments are unjustified.

The outstanding differences between Smith and Hoover on the tariff are two. The first is on the inclusiveness and fairness to all groups of the protection offered; the second is on the project and method of further tariff revision.

Smith makes an unequivocal promise not to interfere with present duties as far as they give real protection to legitimate business and labor. Disregarding theory as to what would have been the best policy for the country in the beginning, he recognizes that the tariff has become an American institution, which, if suddenly upset, would be sadly missed by numerous industries. Thus he exorcises the fear of economic disturbance from a Democratic election, and further pleas by the Republicans on this score may be set down as unadulterated buncombe. But Smith makes the further observation that one great economic class—the farmers who have surplus crops to export—cannot benefit from protection without a machinery to lift the

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export surplus off the domestic market. Instead of abolishing tariff privilege, he proposes to pass it around by including the farmers. So long as protective duties are given to a few groups, the economic effect is to subsidize them at the expense of the rest of the nation. But if all groups could receive equal protection, special tariff privilege would vanish, and the effect would be substantially the same as if we had had free trade from the beginning—excepting, of course, any evil results we might suffer from having encouraged the survival of basically unfit or inefficient domestic industries.

The New Republic believes that, in theory, the nation would have been better off if it had got rid of the protective tariff long ago. But it also believes that, in practice, we should today suffer more from a sudden dislocation of industry consequent upon drastic tariff revision than we should gain. The next best course is obviously, therefore, to abolish the privilege element in the tariff by seeing that it includes everyone. Neither Smith nor anyone else could devise a tariff system which would really protect all economic groups equally, but at least he promises to repair the greatest fault by the establishment of machinery to handle the export surplus of the farmers so that they may benefit from existing duties. The difference between the two candidates in this respect is, that Hoover intends to keep the tariff as an instrument of special privilege to manufacturing industry, while Smith intends to extend its benefits to agriculture. Manufacture will, in the long run, be in far greater danger of losing its tariff if agriculture is not brought within the fold than if it is.

The second difference between the candidates is of even greater significance to the progress of business and the maintenance of high political standards in our national government. For years the process of raising the tariff by congressional enactment has been recognized as a national scandal. No individual Congressman had the time or expertness to understand the many schedules. There was a great and boiling lobby of special interests, each attempting to write its own schedule. The final bill was invariably a hodge-podge in which the most powerful interests got what they wanted by a process of trading and log-rolling. And the whole procedure led to lightly veiled corruption in the nomination and election of Congressmen, as well as to the process above adverted to, of passing the hat during the campaign to the interests hopeful of protection.

President Taft, as Governor Smith points out, was one of the first to demand a Tariff Commission for the sake of ending this scandal and corruption. The Tariff Commission was supposed to "take the tariff out of politics"—not by removing from Congress the right and duty of outlining the principles according to which duties should be figured, but by passing over to experts the task of research and figuring. The Commission, temporarily submerged during Wilson's first administration, was finally recognized as the authoritative instrument of information on relative costs of production here and abroad, in Wilson's second term. Even the Commission had difficult problems to solve in determining the facts. But its virtue—recognized by candid Republicans and impartial economists, as well as by Democrats, was that it prevented the old, disgraceful and disturbing process of wholesale and unenlightened revision by Congress.

Smith tells the story of how Coolidge emasculated the Tariff Commission. He promises to revive and strengthen it. He pledges, without equivocation, to countenance no general tariff revision—but only revision of specific schedules when, as and if the facts discovered by the Commission indicate to Congress that certain industries are receiving too much or too little protection. Hoover, speaking in Boston, belittled the Commission, and threatened to encourage another general revision upward by Congress. And, as we have pointed out in a previous issue, a revision upward is likely to be as unsettling to business through its arbitrary interference with established price relationships as a revision downward. Hoover's position on this matter is stultifying to his claim to competence as an economist, to his asserted respect for facts as an engineer, to his promise to give us a more businesslike administration of government. And it threatens far more disturbance to business than does Smith's. By abetting the party managers in bringing this plea to the front in the last weeks of the campaign, he is returning to the worst traditions of Republican politics.

So far as the tariff is an issue in this campaign, we have to choose not between the theory of tariff for revenue only on one side, and protection on the other, but between Smith's practical policy of distributing tariff favors more equitably and avoiding any general tariff revision, and Hoover's intention to debauch the representative political machinery and disturb business by another log-rolling imposition of still higher duties.

Professional and Business Self-Regulation

NEW YORK City has recently furnished a peculiarly instructive example of the way in which a well organized business and professional group can by its own efforts deal with the abuses which corrupt the conditions of its craft or professional work. We refer to the recent decision of the Actors' Equity Association to assume the function of regulating the theatrical agencies. Hereafter it will not allow any member of the Union to accept an engagement through an agency which has not received a licence from Equity and has not consented to abide by its terms. Under the proposed

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plan the licensee must agree with Equity not to charge more than 5 percent of the salary for the first ten weeks of the employment which he obtains for an actor, not to accept any bonuses or gratuities in addition to this percentage, and not to split any part of his commission with any employer or any other member of Equity. The Association on its part guarantees to the agent the payment of the commission. Any member of the Association who fails to pay it will be appropriately disciplined by the Council, and, if necessary, suspended. Many of the existing agencies have agreed to accept an Equity license, but a considerable minority have decided to fight. They have already enjoined Equity against putting the plan into effect, and they will try to prove in court that they are being deprived of rights which are secured by existing contracts. Their practical objection to the proposed regulation is that the permitted fee is not large enough to enable them to do business. Presumably this complaint has some foundation. When excessive charges for particular services have obtained, the natural tendency is to increase unnecessarily the number of people who rush in to perform the service. The business of obtaining employment for actors can be adequately performed by a much smaller number of agents than those who now divide the fees. If there were not too many agents, there would probably be little truth in the contention of Equity that the fees have been extortionate.

This particular effort of Equity to regulate the agencies is the result of several previous failures to accomplish the same result. The grievances which it seeks to cure are of long standing. Agencies have, of course, a legitimate service to perform in relation to the employment of actors and actresses. It is their business to discover what openings there are for actors and what actors are available to fill them. They bring the actor and the manager together, and if the actor is their client, they give him advice in negotiating his bargain with the manager. But the business is obviously one which lends itself to chicanery and abuse. The very weaknesses of the average actor as a man of business, which may make him seek the service of an agency, furnish the agencies themselves with a tempting opportunity to take advantage of a client. Recently they have demanded 10 percent or more of the actor's salary for the entire run of the engagement, and they have usually succeeded in enforcing the demand. They were able to enforce it because several important producing firms would not hire actors or actresses except through designated agents, in which case the producer himself received a percentage of the commission. He managed in this way to extort perhaps a 5 percent rebate on the salary which he had agreed to pay the performer. It was the custom of some of the agencies to go further than this and to intimate to an actor, when he registered, that he would be much more likely to obtain an engagement if he would stimulate their zeal by an immediate bonus in cash and an additional reward when he signed an advantageous contract.

While abuses of this kind are of long standing, they have been particularly widespread and offensive of late. It was not the Actors' Equity which first exerted itself to remedy them, but the White Rats Actors' Union. Twenty-five years ago, this union, consisting almost entirely of vaudeville performers, was a powerful organization, with considerable resources. Its members were exasperated even then by the agency abuses, and the Union spent a great deal of money in obtaining the passage of bills which regulated such agents and their fees. At its solicitation the New York legislature adopted a law which forbade agents to charge for obtaining employment more than half of one week's salary, or 10 percent of the salary for five weeks, or 5 percent for ten weeks. The law, however, was never enforced with much success. This was particularly true of vaudeville performers. Completely controlling as they did the employment of actors through the booking office which engaged acts, the circuits succeeded in extorting, not only the 5 percent which the law allowed, but various additional commissions. The ordinary vaudeville performer paid back indirectly, almost always, about 7½ percent of his salary for the opportunity to work for the circuits, and in many cases anywhere from 10 to 20 percent.

In the field of the drama and musical comedy conditions were never as bad as they were in vaudeville. The agencies, however, evaded the law by refusing to apply for a license and by setting up as "personal representatives" or "managers" of the actors for whom they procured jobs. Possibly Equity might have devised some legal remedy for this evasion of the law, but in the end a mightier power tied its hands and forced it to invent another method of escape. The legislature of New Jersey had, at a later date, passed a statute similar to that of New York, and in a decision which was delivered in late May of this year, six justices of the Federal Supreme Court out of nine declared it to be a violation of the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Since then, there has been no serious attempt to enforce the New York law; and the practice of charging 10 percent of an actor's salary for the whole term of the engagement has been general, if not universal. Certain managers practically required actors whom they engaged to sign contracts for employment at a designated agency which demanded and received 10 percent of the actor's salary for the whole period of the engagement. In some instances an agent would notify a half-dozen actors of a possible demand for their services. The actor who succeeded in landing the job had to do all the work himself. Yet he

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was forced to pay the agent as his "personal representative" 10 percent of everything earned by virtue of the engagement. It is no wonder that, when the Council of Equity proposed to the members of the Association the establishment of an effective licensing system, there was not among its members a single dissenting vote.

It was fortunate for the actors that they had a remedy. The law had failed them. Under the ruling of the Supreme Court, there was no way except by an amendment to the federal Constitution (or a change in the attitude of the court) whereby the State could protect them against the gross abuses from which they were suffering. As individuals they were, of course, impotent. The abuses existed precisely because as individuals they were impotent. But fortunately, as actors they were not merely individuals, but the members of a powerful group. Their Association occupies an exceptional position. No actor can give a performance on an American stage unless he is a member of Equity. No manager can produce a play unless he complies with Equity's conditions. The producing managers possess no similarly powerful organization. In fact, Equity itself was obliged to press upon the managers more effective coöperation among themselves as a necessary condition of improving the morale of the industry. It provides a government for the American theater whose authority within the limits in which it is used is indisputable.

This power exists by virtue of the closed Equity shop, which compels every individual who appears in or produces a play anywhere in the United States to obey Equity orders. So far as we know, no other American industry or profession exercises any similarly comprehensive and unchallengeable authority. Many unions at different times have operated closed shops, but only within limited areas and usually not for long. The power, when it has existed, has usually been abused. It is certainly abused by the unions which furnish labor for buildings and it is, according to the managers, abused by some of the craft unions connected with theatrical productions. But in the case of Equity it has not been abused. The Association has, of course, exercised its authority frankly to promote the common interests of its members. It has standardized and improved the conditions under which plays are produced. It has protected American actors from what was considered to be the unfair competition of Englishmen and women. It is now trying to abate some very real abuses which have arisen with the employment of actors through agencies. In carrying out these policies, it has incurred bitter opposition from managers, from other actors and now from the employment agencies. But after the fight was over and the adjustment made, its former opponents have frequently admitted the event justified the Equity policy. It has remedied abuses and improved standards, not only without harm to the industry and without injustice to the victims of its regulation, but with positive benefit to all concerned except to those who were themselves doing harm to other people. One would have to search far to find a better example of the beneficent exercise of such irresistible power.

What is the explanation? It is chiefly the quality of its management. The most remarkable fact about Equity is, not so much the existence of the power and its victory over its opponents, as the freedom from internal dissensions as the result of its exercise. Equity is strong because it is united. It is united because its administration has earned the confidence of its members. It has always encouraged the expression of grievances on their part, and it has restricted its interference in their affairs and in the affairs of their employers to justifiable limits. As a consequence of the policy of their union, the professional life of the actor contains a rare and happy combination of individualism and collectivism. Individual actors and managers are free to enter into any arrangement that they please about salary and most conditions of employment. All that Equity insists on is a minimum wage for the proletarians of the profession (the chorus girls), certain minimum conditions of decency about periods of rehearsals, and the like, and certain guarantees about the payment of salaries. It provides for the industry an alert, an incorruptible, a fair, a progressive and a benevolent government, but a government which is not officious and paternal. Political scientists would do well to study the combination in order to find out what a government can or cannot do with advantage to its citizens. We do not know of any political government which achieved in the exercise of its power so much successful assertion of authority with so much moderation. And certainly in those industries over which the employer exercises a similarly indisputable control the wage-earners have never been as justly treated as the producing managers have been by Equity.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Protestantism and Prohibition

AT THE last annual meeting of the Anti-Saloon League, a high official of that organization expressed the conviction that the Civil War had set a precedent for the method which may yet be necessary to suppress the "liquor rebellion." The Army and the Navy had been used to abolish slavery, he declared, and it might be necessary to use them before a recalcitrant minority would finally accept the will of the nation in the matter of prohibition enforcement. Somewhat as an afterthought he disavowed the intention of pressing the suggestion, since, as he admitted, the idea was incompatible with the ambition of the Churches to abolish war. Nevertheless, he could not resist the temptation of drawing the none-too-historical analogy between prohibition and slavery.

Waiving the point that it was not slavery but secession against which force was used, and that the emancipation of the slaves was an incident in the Northern war strategy, it is interesting to note the relation of the good man's afterthought to his original threat. The two together reveal the confused mind of the Church on the question of the use of force and compulsion in social relations. While no large group within the Churches has ever adhered to the thorough-going non-resistance which characterizes the ethics of Jesus, there has always been a dim and there is a growing realization of the fact that a religious world-view and a spiritual appreciation of human personality is inconsistent with coercive social methods and incompatible with social violence.

On the other hand, American Protestantism is governed by its Puritan traditions, and the prohibition movement is in a sense the flower of Puritanism. It represents the Puritan passion for personal rectitude and the Puritan's willingness to use political force for the establishment and maintenance of his ethical standards. The fact that Puritan standards of righteousness are in many respects diametrically opposed to the ideals of love which Jesus preached is only dimly realized by most Christians. Social prudence will always qualify any absolute devotion to the ideal of love which Jesus preached, but one has the right to expect that the ideal will, at least, color in some slight degree the social policy of the Church. If the Church believes that coercion is justified in the preservation of certain moral standards (and in such a belief most thoughtful social scientists will be in agreement with it), it ought certainly to be careful to define the measure of coercion which seems morally legitimate and socially effective.

Perhaps we may regard it as axiomatic that social coöperation without the use of any coercion is possible only in the smallest and most ideal communities. In all larger communities, which must deal with a considerable number of morally chaotic and anti-social persons, some social compulsion, finally involving physical or police force, seems necessary and inevitable. Force is a necessary evil in social life. But necessary evils easily grow into unnecessary ones if the circumstances under which and the ends for which they are to be applied are not carefully defined.

Unqualified sanction of the State's police power involves more than one peril. States and societies which avail themselves of coercive means in dealing with minorities are usually tempted to deal as mercilessly with their progressive and constructive minorities as with their anti-social groups, and thus they retard their progress and throttle the creative forces in their own life. The prohibition movement represents yet another peril of the State's coercive power. It is the danger of the majority using the police power of the State in an effort to coerce a minority too large to yield easily to such force, and too well fortified in its own conscience to accept the dictates of the majority as ultimate law.

The comparative strength of majorities which support a law and of minorities which oppose it does not determine the ethical character of the project involved in a legal enactment, but it does determine the moral character of enforcement procedure. Ideally, laws should be adopted by common consent, so that they would require enforcement only upon that small minority of chaotic souls who are incapable of self-discipline. Practically such unanimity is impossible, and a State must therefore arrive at its standards by majority decisions. If the majority is large, the social facts approximate those emerging from unanimity. Public opinion gradually solidifies about the law, and opposition is dissipated.

It is naturally impossible to gauge the comparative strength of majorities and minorities in advance. When a new law represents striking departures from accepted standards, its proponents may be justified in insisting upon it in the face of opposition from a large minority, hoping that time and experience may justify it and reduce the opposition. It was this hope which animated and seemed to justify the prohibitionists in the early days of the experiment. Indeed, statistics seem to prove that over a period of two or three years opposition to the Eighteenth Amendment gradually decreased; at least, observance of its provisions grew more general. Since then, the facts no longer encourage the hope of a gradual dissipation of the opposition. It is not easy to gain a true picture of the social facts emerging from so vast an experiment, but no one can deny that the law is opposed

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by a large minority, that the minority includes multitudes of socially approved and, in regard to other standards, not anti-social individuals, and that in some, particularly in urban, communities, this minority has become a virtual majority, with most of the organs of public opinion in its control. The threats of vanquishing such a minority through increasing use of police pressure are becoming progressively more dangerous and futile. They are dangerous, because they tend to sanction coercion as a method of social adjustment; they are futile, because coercion tends to confirm the position of minorities which have any degree of self-respect in holding to their convictions.

It is unfortunate that the Protestant Churches, chief proponents of the prohibition experiment, should have put themselves in the position of finding their chief social and political function in encouraging and inciting the State to use increasing penal pressure in suppressing opposition to prohibition. They may justify such a course by pointing to the criminal class of bootleggers which the outlawed liquor trade has developed, but they cannot escape the fact that the demands of respectable clients support this class of criminals. Whatever the State may do to secure conformity to its standards, it is hardly the business of the Church, ostensibly committed to the task of creating morally disciplined and dependable character, to use the "secular arm" for accomplishing by violence what it is unable to attain by moral suasion.

The crux of the prohibition problem lies clearly not in the field of political methods, but in that of moral ideas. The real problem which confronts the Churches is not whether they can coerce opposing minorities, but whether they can obtain the more general acceptance of the moral ideas and ideals which prompted the prohibition project. While prohibition is primarily the fruit of Puritan Protestantism, it is prompted by ideals, and promises social consequences, which must commend it to society, by whatever cultural and religious traditions it may be informed. As an effort to eliminate drunkenness it is in one sense no different from that of reducing drug addiction by outlawing the trade in narcotics. But there are more important differences than similarities in the two projects. There are many types of intoxicating liquor and many degrees of addiction to its use. It is manifestly impossible to make an effective legal distinction between moderate drinkers and those who are inclined to intemperance; but there is a moral distinction, and that is the very reason why so many find it possible to disobey the law in good conscience. Anyone who studies the moral and psychological facts underlying our present difficulties with the law must realize that enforcement of the law is difficult, precisely because it can make no distinction between drunkenness and the kind of moderate drinking which the conscience of the average man does not envisage as a sin, much less as a crime.

It is not impossible to persuade moderate drinkers to forgo their pleasures and satisfactions for the sake of those who are weak, but that kind of conduct represents an ethical maximum; and law can deal effectively only with ethical minimums. "If meat," said St. Paul, "causes my brother to offend I will have no meat forevermore." There is an irrefutable logic in this position which makes the conscience of the weakest the guide of society; but it can obviously be maintained only by a high moral, not to say religious, discipline. It is the only force which can bridge the gap between what the law prohibits and the average conscience allows.

Obviously it is not easy to develop this type of moral sensitiveness either within or without the Church. However strongly Puritan ideals may have been emphasized in the Protestant Churches, they have had no striking success in persuading their members to be guided by the conscience of their weakest fellows. What they have failed to accomplish within the circle of their special influence is certainly out of the question among those millions who are indifferent to religion or who are informed by Roman Catholic religious traditions, ideals and loyalties. Whether we regard it as a virtue or a limitation, it is a social fact with which we must deal that Latin Christianity does not envisage any such discipline of personal habits as is traditional in Puritan Protestantism. The impartial observer will hardly regard this kind of discipline as either an unqualified virtue or as an unmitigated limitation in Protestantism. But so much is clear: whatever limitations Puritan Christianity reveals are greatly increased when legal and political force is substituted for religious motive in maintaining Puritan standards of conduct.

The American nation is not, as a Methodist bishop asserted recently, committed to "Anglo-Saxon Christianity" as distinguished from "Latin Christianity." Moral and religious ideals ought to compete with and complement each other in a society without the interference of the State, at least as long as they do not result in obvious social harm. In so far as the prohibition movement represents the effort of the Puritan Protestant majority in this country to bring the more recent immigrant groups which are loyal to Latin religious ideas and traditions under the dominion of Puritan ideas by the use of political force, it is alien to the true character of religion and its effect upon the nation is permanently schismatic. There are, of course, Catholics and non-Protestants who believe in prohibition precisely because there are virtues in the movement which transcend the virtues and limitations of Puritanism. Through them the prohibition movement may yet gain the voluntary support of a much larger portion of the responsible elements in the community than it now enjoys. But the prospect is becoming increasingly improbable, for the very reason that the movement has been used by the Protestant majority to coerce a Latin or Catholic minority. Such

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a degree of animosity has been created by this policy that a mutual exchange of values between the two cultural and religious worlds has become difficult, if not impossible.

If the Protestant Churches are to gain a moral rather than a political victory over the opponents of prohibition, it would be necessary to present a much more united front and a much more general acceptance of their ideals among their own members than is now the case. Indeed, one suspects that the passion for law enforcement on the part of the official Church is partly a compensation for the moral defeat of the Church's leadership within its own membership. The difficulty which the Church experiences in maintaining Puritan discipline within its own membership is due to profound rather than to incidental causes. Puritan Christianity is the moral sublimation of the virtues and prejudices of the middle classes. In these classes personal temperance and a strict discipline of individual habits in general has been regarded as the *summum bonum*. Religion is only partly responsible for this characteristic. It arises out of the genteel poverty or modest economic circumstance of the traditional middle classes in which men are not tempted to the kind of indulgence of physical appetites which poor men covet and rich men enjoy. Once created, religious sanctions are developed and appropriated for its maintenance. It is natural that when social and economic circumstances change, religious forces alone should have difficulty in preserving the old moral restraints.

The dilemma of Protestantism in regard to prohibition is partly due to the fact that one set of Puritan virtues is negating another. The virtues of thrift and industry which Puritanism has sanctified in a special way have led to a prosperity which tends to undermine the virtue of temperance. The remarkable prosperity of our nation has not only made it difficult to maintain a religiously motivated discipline of personal habits, but it has actually aggravated the enforcement problem; for the high price of illegally dispensed liquor would really be prohibitive in any nation less prosperous than our own. It was in a sense unfortunate that the prohibition experiment should have been launched at the precise historical moment when the traditional middle classes were emerging from modest circumstances into comparative affluence. It is not to be assumed that wealth and social position are absolutely determinative in gauging the strength and weakness of the Puritan discipline of life. But their influence is unmistakable. Not only the acquisition of wealth but the development of culture tends to relax the kind of moral tension which characterizes Puritan morality.

Obviously the perpetuation of the present experiment does not depend entirely upon the religious forces. Prohibition became a reality through a combination of religious and economic forces. This combination still holds. Large employers of labor who may violate the law themselves are still convinced that prohibition has increased the industry and competence of the workers, and their support of the law is as indispensable for its maintenance as it is dangerous to the moral factors involved. The fact that the political party which is closest to big capital should unvaryingly take the orthodox prohibition position without exerting itself too much in the matter of enforcement is significant rather than accidental. Whatever may be the social consequences of this combination of religious and industrial forces, so well illustrated in the present campaign, the moral outcome of the prohibition movement depends entirely upon the ability of the Churches to persuade their own following to support the law and to win others who do not ordinarily take their inspiration from the Protestant Church. If the Church is to succeed in this enterprise it must produce a religious life vital enough to preserve virtues, which have usually been maintained only in comparative poverty, in the present affluence of America. Such a task is not impossible, but it is a prodigious one; and if institutions of religion renounce it for the sake of finding some political substitute for it, they will only make both their moral and political defeat more inevitable. The prohibitory laws associated with the Eighteenth Amendment are not different from other laws in this, that they can be enforced only when they need no enforcement, *i. e.*, when so large a proportion of the community consents to them that their enforcement becomes merely an ordinary police measure. If it is impossible to secure this kind of proximate unanimity in support of a law it will be better to abandon the experiment, however promising, for fear that it will create greater social evils than it allays.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR.

The Story

Fire blooms in the wood:
Leaf and bud and flower;
Through vein and pith the blood
Of flame shoots for an hour.

Brightness falls to death:
Mutable fire transposed
To body of a breath,
And the strange story closed.

White over sands a wave
Hovers with dipping wings.
Who shall hear the grave
Withdrawal song it sings?

Dark bed of the sea,
Dark sleeper in that bed,
Love will completed be,
And the story said.

HAROLD LEWIS COOK.

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Why I Am for Thomas

And Why a Vote for Anyone Else is Thrown Away

THE average American progressive who fancies himself to be an intellectual continually deplores the fact that we have no labor party here comparable to that of England, and yet votes, with great solemnity, at every election, for the less reactionary of the two old parties. This is amusing enough, but what is even more mirth-provoking is the guileless belief of these towering intellects that they are consistent. From the rapt adoration with which they swarm around the luminaries of the British Labor party when these dignitaries visit our shores, the unsophisticated observer might conclude that an American labor party was about to arise by the process of spontaneous combustion. But these ecstasies have in fact little effect upon the actual political behavior of this species. Its members may day-dream of a strong labor party which will recognize their merit by calling them to leadership (and who, they believe, can be better qualified?), but in practice they will not support any party in which there is not the promise that the seed sown in August shall ripen into political victory by November. Calling themselves realists, they turn their backs on any movement which, aiming at the same ends they espouse, is tainted with the sin of being numerically weak and, instead, support that candidate with a chance of immediate success who promises a few reforms. As these gentlemen are now preparing to go through their quadrennial performance, it may not be inappropriate to cast an eye over their gyrations during the last two decades, in order to determine whether or not they are so wise after all.

Thus we find them in 1908 supporting Bryan, because of his promises to curb injunctions; but by 1912 they had persuaded themselves that they were indeed standing at Armageddon, not only with Roosevelt, but with the Lord as well. Four years later, it was again the Democratic party under Wilson which was the hope of pacific liberals. In 1920, like Stephen Leacock's hero, they mounted their horse and rode off in all directions. Some supported Cox in order to ensure our entrance into the League of Nations. Others, at the advice of Hoover and Hughes, rallied behind the statesman from Marion, in order to obtain the same end more effectively. Still others felt that Harding was just the man to end the imperialistic policy in the Caribbean which had been fostered by their erstwhile liberal hero, Woodrow Wilson. A few supported the struggling Farmer-Labor party, only to desert it immediately after election.

In 1924 hopes beat high for the hastily organized candidacy of La Follette, but when the liberals found that only five million others had voted similarly, or approximately as large a proportion of the votes as the Socialist party has ever commanded in France, they were immediately plunged into the deepest dejection. Some took the boat for Europe; others, like Candide, cultivated their gardens. Now we find Eastern liberals enthusiastic about Smith because he is humane, believes in the publicly owned generation (though not transmission) of power, and has denounced the Coolidge policy in Central America, while some of the Western liberals lean to Hoover because of the genuinely pacific and humanitarian promptings of his Quaker heart.

Now, since all this running hither and thither has been justified in the name of political realism, it is only proper to use that standard in determining whether or not liberal ends have been as well furthered by this wandering as they would have been by the investment of the same energy in fostering an independent party, based solidly on the economic interests of rural, urban and intellectual workers.

In the first place, our pseudo-realists, in trying to pick a winner, have generally supported candidates who have had little more chance of success than the humbler parties which they have rejected. Despite the truly gallant efforts of Governor Smith to pump political vitality into his candidacy, there is every prospect that the liberals who now support him will have no better luck. Secondly, in those few instances when a darling of the liberals has been successful, events have almost invariably shown that he is far less liberal-spirited than the intelligentsia have credited him with being, and that they have totally underestimated the terrific pressure from selfish business and nationalistic interests to which he is inevitably subjected. Woodrow Wilson is here, of course, the crowning example. For almost a generation, therefore, the American liberals have, by their aimless political philandering, thrown away their votes, and they now find themselves at the end weaker than when they began, and without a political home.

If we turn to England, and consider not merely the brilliant maturity of the Labor party, but also its slow growth over nearly forty years, even an American intellectual can see that this has largely been due to the maintenance of an independent organization through years in which there was absolutely no prospect of political success. There were Worldly Wisemen galore in England during the nineties who whispered to Keir Hardie and his followers that it was folly to set up an Independent Labor party, and that labor should, instead, pin its

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faith upon either the social-reform sympathies of Joseph Chamberlain or the Gladstonian Liberalism of Morley and Campbell-Bannerman. But Keir Hardie and his men had what is rarer than intellectual subtlety: namely, moral courage, and they knew that they were building, not for a few years only, but for decades, and, indeed, for all time itself. It was the presence of the Independent Labor party which later furnished the political nucleus upon which the trade unions, in their resentment over the Taff-Vale decision, could build, and it has ever since impregnated the larger body with the stimulus of its own imaginative devotion.

Thus both the negative experience of America and the positive experience of England demonstrate that, if a strong labor party is desired, the way to secure it is patiently to build through the years an independent and aggressive political party, and not to run constantly from one of the old parties to the other for those short-run gains which are generally illusory.

All this would seem definitely to demonstrate that it is the duty this year of every economic liberal to support Norman Thomas and the Socialist party. But before one can finally accept this conclusion, there are at least three further questions which need to be answered: (1) whether, despite our verbal allegiance to the idea of a labor party, such a group is really needed in so prosperous a country as America; (2) whether it is possible to build up such a party; and (3) whether the Socialist party, as at present constituted, should be encouraged to become its nucleus.

The Labor parties of Europe owe their impetus to the positive misery of most of their working classes. They are, as Patten would have said, the product of a pain economy. Does the high level of real wages in America (which is from 60 to 75 percent above that of Great Britain), and the recent extraordinary increase in production, amounting as it has to over 40 percent per employee, remove the necessity for any such party here? The answer to this is that, while the material progress of the workers has in the last fifteen years been real, the situation is by no means as favorable as Mr. Hoover and his fellow prosperity-shouters would have us believe. A large proportion of the families of urban unskilled labor, as Miss Houghteling has definitively shown, are still below the subsistence level of living, and the others are precariously close to it. There is virtually no collective protection against the hazards of illness, unemployment and indigent old age, while the distribution of wealth and income is grossly inequitable.

Many industries, such as coal, textiles and farming, are in a mess, and need collective measures to pull them out. An orientation in our foreign policy toward peace is moreover imperatively demanded such as only an international solidarity among the workers can give.

These are changes which can be effected only by a party founded on the solid economic interests of those who are to benefit from them. They cannot come from the Republican party, which is quite definitely the party of property, nor can they permanently be fostered by that hodge-podge of the reactionary South and the boss-ridden Irish-Catholic machines of the North which operates under the name of the Democratic party. Even the New Republic itself furnishes only a very attenuated hope that liberals can help their avowed cause by supporting Smith. In the issue of September 12, the most which the editors can find to say for their candidate is that a vote for him is "an affirmation of the reality of a supposititious political alternative to Republicanism." Liberalism has indeed come to a somewhat sorry pass if such a tarnished and hypothetical prospect as this becomes its dominant political goal. To vote for Smith really means, however, to perpetuate a contradictory symbol and thereby to postpone that realignment of voters on the basis of real differences of interests and ideals which the New Republic has, on countless occasions in the past, pointed out as perhaps the greatest need in our political life.

The failure thus far to create an effective labor party has led many to disbelieve in its ultimate possibility. The difficulties in its way certainly should not be minimized. The present indifference of the skilled crafts and the individualism of the farmers are great impediments. The temptation to believe that the old parties can be captured through the direct primaries, the task of getting national unity out of the forty-eight state policies, and the direct election of the executive are all difficulties which the British Labor party is not compelled to face. But these are not insuperable. If the unskilled and semi-skilled could be unionized, their natural desire for legislative protection would probably force the American Federation of Labor to support a labor party. This was precisely the effect in England of the organization of the unskilled, and if the *laissez-faire* philosophy of Henry Broadhurst could be overcome there, then the similar philosophy of Gompers can in time be superseded here by the less skilled. If a strong independent political nucleus is encouraged, moreover, it can by its agitation hasten the coming of this larger labor party and can provide an organized framework which will help it to get started.

The only question, therefore, which should remain for a realistic liberal is whether the Socialist party is worthy of being encouraged as the evangel of the coming labor party. An obvious answer is that it now is the only party in the field which can fulfill that mission. The Farmer-Labor party of 1920 collapsed because there was not enough spiritual devotion in its members. Even a poll of five millions did not give the La Follette movement sufficient courage to continue. The Socialist party, with all its faults, has alone possessed the vitality to endure, and, what is more, to improve. Many

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liberals have in the past been deterred from supporting it because in so doing they were required to support a dogmatic Marxism which, so far as the labor theory of value was concerned, had no more to do with the basic principles of Socialism than the tenets of the fundamentalists have with the message of Christianity. The present platform, however, wisely dispenses with all this economic theology, and bases its program solely upon realities. It calls not only for the public ownership of power, as does Governor Smith, but also for its distribution by the public, which Smith does not advocate, and the absence of which would largely prevent the economies of the super-power system from penetrating to the ultimate consumer. It advocates the nationalization of the coal industry as the surest means of closing down the excess mines, and of joining the industry up with the development of power. Alone among the parties, it demands a thorough-going system of social insurance and the skimming off, through taxes on large incomes, inheritances, and economic rent, of those socially appropriable surpluses which are not necessary to carry on production, but which are, instead, merely tolls levied because of a monopolistic position. Finally its foreign policy is a very model for liberalism, calling as it does for the withdrawal of our troops from Nicaragua and Haiti, the limitation of armaments, the cancellation of the debts, provided European armaments are reduced; and, if the Treaty of Versailles is revised, affiliation with the League of Nations. It has further modernized its own machinery by abandoning a belief in Marxism as a prerequisite for membership, which now rests solely on a belief in the democratization of industry and in independent political action by the workers of hand and brain. It has given a further earnest of its sincerity in pledging itself to coöperate with all groups which may later wish to combine in a labor party, and by its action in the La Follette campaign has shown that it is willing to take its place, like the Independent Labor party, in a larger whole. Finally, in Norman Thomas, it has nominated a man who is intellectually the equal of Hoover and of Smith, and who, despite their real virtues, is morally their superior.

Supporting Thomas is not only the best way of helping to create a labor party, but it is also the best way of wringing concessions from the old parties. A large Socialist vote would put far more pressure upon the Republicans and Democrats to liberalize their policies lest they suffer further losses than could any inchoate and unorganized collection of liberals without a party to give them effectiveness. A liberal can, therefore, exercise more influence upon the old parties from without.

If, in the face of all this, the liberals persist once again in supporting one of the old parties, they will demonstrate anew that they are in fact neither intellectuals nor realists, but merely political Babbitts who worship immediate and visible power and who lightly sacrifice an ultimate promise of American life for highly hypothetical concessions. In no other walk of life would they expect to gain their ends so cheaply, nor can they, in fact, do so in politics. They need most of all to ponder and to adopt the political as well as moral implications of William James' famous passage:

> As for me, my bed is made: I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time. So I am against all big organizations as such, national ones first and foremost; against all big successes and big results; and in favor of the eternal forces of truth which always work in the individual and immediately unsuccessful way, underdogs always, till history comes, after they are long dead, and puts them on the top.

PAUL H. DOUGLAS.

Brown October Al

WHEN October comes to Woppington, the leaves turn yellow and Horace W. Witherspoon turns mellow. As the nights grow cooler our peerless leader grows warmer, circulating freely among the enfranchised, democratic, genial and hard to insult.

"An Evening Post, please," he said to Elmer Durkin in the deepening shadows of the dying day, "and a kind word."

"Check." The newsdealer tossed over the desired journal. "And the kind word is, shoot some pep into your campaign. It's ossified both ways from the chin."

"Everything is going splendidly, Elmer. All the issues are gradually becoming clear."

"That's too many issues, Judge. I've totaled them up and the answer is one. Its front name is Al. Eight million words I've lapped up, man and boy, and all but eighteen have been about Alfred Emanuel. People buzz about what he thinks and what he drinks, how he stacks up with the Tammany Tiger, where he goes to church and how he foozles his adverbs, his public life and his private wife. There's more gab about what model skypiece he wears on top of his dome than what the opposish wears inside. What's this baby's name again—your human avalanche?"

"Oh, come now, Elmer—"

"Never mind; it'll register later. How come his face does not choose to run? He only talks enough to keep the franchise and then he makes a noise like a dopey evening in the night school. If your buddie doesn't chisel into this ruckus pretty soon he'll get the bench-warmer's epizoötic. He snags about as much press as the King of the Walyos."

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"He doesn't have to talk all the time," said the grand old partisan. "He has pledged himself to the Coolidge policies. That's enough."

"The echo of a silence! Where is there any rah material in that? Whoosis is the biggest vacuum that has bought chips in this game since Charley Hughes took his gloom-ride. Wouldn't you know they'd name a vacuum cleaner after him! I haven't lamped anybody up to yet who is going to vote for that sleeping sickness, though plenty of crabs will stick the old 'x' on him because of the dirt they got from Old Lady Rumor about the Happy Warrior."

"Smith's personal habits are no concern of ours—"

"Except his victory habit."

"Which is about to be cured. At the same time you will notice that they don't tell scandalous tales about the Republican candidate."

"I hope to tell you! They don't even whisper about Whatsisname. That was tried, but it was a flop. Nobody worries what he pokes into his alimentary canal, but they yammer about everything Smith has said and done since he graduated from the Fulton school of fish.

"A bird was in this dump today giving me the lowdown on Al's private fortune. This bozo went through Albany once on the rattler and he knew his groceries. The big-hearted guy made Alfred a present of fifty million smackers.

"Oscar Binns tried to pin the old gondola thing on the Governor the other day—you know, the hot sketch that ends up, 'Let Nature take its course.' Young Alfred probably guffawed all over the mackerel when he first heard that mossy one, but it was six-star final stuff to Oscar.

"Your best-minders get up and shoot the schmoos about the tariff and the customers walk out on them. Pure Democrats ankle over to the mike and sink the harpoon into that flock of racketeers that swarmed all over Gamaliel, and the great unseen audience jiggles the dial and tunes in on 'That's my weakness now.' All they want is Al.

"Everybody sticks in a word, pro or con. Heflin beefs around that he is too clubby with the Pope, Bill White yawps that he wears the worst features of Tweed and Croker, and Dear Mabel thinks he's Bacchus' kid brother. Sometimes they love him, sometimes they hate him, but every debate sounds like a dog show. Who spills any chatter about your boy friend? I hear Cal might slip him a cordial pat on the bean and Hughes is due for a little whiskering campaign. If the big sneezes don't give him a hand pretty soon, he can sue for nonsupport.

"Al Smith panicked them out in the sticks—you can't laugh that off. I never would have cast the Oliver Streeter in a Western, but those hicks gave him a big hand when he did his stuff, laughed at his nifties and hooked his brown derby.

"Of course, I'm not jerry yet how many goofers are going to mention Smith in their popular will on chooseday the sixth, but he sure sops up the spotlight in October. If the electoral college would speak his name anything like the way the human race does, he'd be there at the payoff.

"I see where the straw votaries of the Literary Digest give the G. O. P. the big edge, but Smith is cutting a mean gash in the Coolidge boys of twenty-four, with Norman Thomas running a peppy third. I tried to dope that to the finish and everybody got elected but Verne L. Reynolds."

The temporarily genial Witherspoon oozed confidence from every pore.

"We're satisfied, Elmer. The people talk about Smith, but they will vote for Hoover."

Elmer ardently grasped his victim's hand.

"You're right, Judge. Hoover! That's the name I've been trying to think of all day."

FELIX RAY.

Washington Notes

THESE warm October days are full of strain and stress for the sensitive soul of the Republican nominee. More unpleasant things have happened to him in the past four weeks than he ever dreamed possible—and not all of them have been, it is safe to say, visible to the naked eye. In other words, some of his most poignant griefs have been hidden from all save a few sympathetic and sorrowing friends. Worse, he suspects—and so do they—that in the coming four weeks there will be many more things of the same sort. This is not, it may be freely admitted, a nice prospect for any man, but for one with the tender sensibilities of Herbert it is a really appalling outlook. Still, it must be borne, and the reward—if there is a reward—will be very great.

It is impossible, however, to avoid contrasting the truculent delight with which Smith campaigns, with the misery which this whole business of appealing for the votes of the allegedly intelligent electorate imposes upon Mr. Hoover. To say that he does not enjoy his campaign is to put it mildly indeed. Of his very genuine sufferings there is not the slightest doubt. To the "Happy Warrior," politics is his natural element, a joyous game which he is particularly and specially fitted to play and for which he has gifts as rare as they are remarkable. Without politics, his life would lose its flavor. He would not know what to do with himself.

With Mr. Hoover, politics is a necessary evil, a business that has to be endured in order to achieve the presidency, but one for which he has a profound distaste, no talent at all and an ever-growing disgust. Aside, however, from his congenital aversion for this side of life, from which there is no escape, two things have combined this time to make Herbert's position as his party's candidate for the presidency more difficult than that of any of his predecessors, since poor Mr. Taft made his not altogether successful run in 1912. One of these is, of course, his complete inexperience as either a candidate or a campaigner. If he had been through just one fight for a minor office on his own hook, some, at least, of the awkwardness with

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which he handles himself would be lost. The other is the more or less obvious disposition among the more conspicuous members of his party, the particular men whose names mean most, and who could do most, to refrain from helping to any large or earnest extent. There is a tendency to let Herbert flounder around in his own inept way practically alone. "It is," they seem to say, "his show. Let him run it." Perhaps by the time this piece is printed, one or two of them may have made something more than a perfunctory gesture, but up to date that is pretty nearly all he has got from any of those at the top, always excepting William Edgar Borah, whose speeches, as I have previously pointed out, have been the only really effective ones on the Republican side. Word comes to Washington, from sources which are usually of unimpeachable reliability, that more than anything else, the Borah speeches have provided the needed antidote and answer in the agricultural sections, not only to the farm-relief speech of the "Happy Warrior," but to the activity of the oily Mr. Peek, who has gone over to the Democratic party with his whole box of tricks.

But to return to Herbert and his lack of enthusiastic support from the "high dogs" of his party, as they would call them in colored circles in the South. Of course, the person who has failed him worse than anyone else is his jolly little friend in the White House, Mr. C. Coolidge, whose Hoover recommendations so far, as one of the Smith organs pointed out a few days ago, are about as hearty as one would give to a gardener or furnace man whose departure was contemplated without regret. In view of the particularly partisan and personal appeal made by him two years ago for the election of the unfortunate and melancholy William M. Butler as Senator from Massachusetts, the White House alibi about desiring to keep the presidency out of partisan politics becomes not only insincere, but absurd. As an excuse, it is as thin as religious tolerance in an Alabama county, as cold as a banker's heart.

The plain truth is that the good Calvin does not want to do anything in this campaign and has no great interest in it. True, he dislikes, as actively as such a man can, the tough and truculent Smith, but he is a long way from loving the efficient Hoover. He never did, as a great many persons in position to know are well aware. He is a passionless, ungenerous little man, and in my judgment will make some sort of speech for Hoover before the campaign is over, not because he wants to, but only because he has to. Left to himself he would not speak. Urged by Hoover and Hoover's particular friends, he would not speak; but urged and advised, as I think he will be, by the same large figures of finance upon whom he has leaned so heavily for the past five years, I think he will. These gentlemen, while undeniably cool toward Herbert personally, prefer him to Smith, despite the latter's guarantee that he is "safe" on the tariff, and the glowing words of Owen D. Young. Speaking of Mr. Young reminds me that some of his associates in the world of business say he "Otto Kahns" a little too much—whatever that may mean. What these close friends of Mr. Coolidge are primarily interested in is a continuation of a Republican administration at Washington. They do not feel safe with a President who has had to angle for support with the bait Smith has had to use. They look with distrust upon his alliances with the Peeks and La Follettes, Norrises and Shipsteads. In other words, they do not like Herbert, but they don't want a Democrat. They want a reactionary, not a liberal.

When these gentlemen advise Mr. Coolidge to come out of his shell and speak for Herbert, out he will come. Until they do, it is of no use whatever for Dr. Work or Dr. Fess or Dr. Hoover himself to do any hinting, urging or appealing. They will get nowhere. They will merely enable the Democrats to capitalize the pointed lack of presidential interest in the party's candidate. Mr. Coolidge may have come out before this piece is printed, but if he does, the reason will be the one given.

It must be admitted, however, that despite these and other more or less depressing circumstances, despite the dreadful damage done by the devoted but too unanimous Mabel, despite the ill-advised letters of the lady committeewoman in Virginia and the other unsavory examples of religious prejudice which have blotted his campaign—despite all these and considerably more, Herbert is holding pretty steady. He suffers, but he stands firm. No amount of badgering has served to swerve him from that carefully-thought-out policy which he evolved, all by himself, immediately after his nomination. In effect, it is simply to ignore the fact that he has an opponent, on no account to pay any attention to anything the opposing candidate may say, at no time and under no conditions to mention his name. This is a Coolidge policy. It is the way Coolidge functioned four years ago. It was successful with him, but whether it will be so with Herbert remains to be seen. There are several fairly strong reasons why it may not. One, of course, is that he has not the advantage Mr. Coolidge had of being able to make his fight from the White House, surrounded by its glamor and aided by its great prestige and publicity facilities. Another is that the prosperity which was so tremendous an asset to the Republican cause in 1924 is very much diluted now. Another is that many of the farmers are in worse shape than they were four years ago, and their resentment against the Republican party has been intensified, not only by the years, but by the failure of the administration to be sympathetic toward their troubles. Finally—and perhaps this is the most potent reason of all—Herbert has a far stronger and more dangerous opponent than Mr. Coolidge had.

At the same time, I do believe that the Hooverian policy of ignoring the other side is about the best thing he could have chosen. In the first place, he would be at a far worse disadvantage in a debate with Smith than as a target. In the second place, his failure to fight back, while dampening to the spirits of his followers, is also exasperating to his opponents. It creates in them a disposition to talk too much. It is also calculated to engender a feeling of futility. On Herbert's side, and so far as Herbert personally is concerned, there is very little fighting about his fight. But should he win it—and the odds at this writing still are about three to one that he will—he will be hailed as a very wise and far-seeing politician. Perhaps, for all his inexperience, that is what he is.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Fondest Hopes

IN the room that Raphael's celebrated Madonna has to herself, like a chapel, a row of people sit, I see them through the door. They sit against the wall, some of them mumbling to each other, some looking idly around, some gazing at the picture opposite. There is nothing else in the place. The entire atmosphere is of something special, unique in the world, and exalted to the point of deep divinity.

I know, of course, how our grandfathers said right and left that this was the greatest picture in the world. But the sight of such a starring is too much. I turn to my companion to exclaim, but am corrected by the custodian who stands by the door plainly for this purpose. One must not speak above a whisper in this room, he says, sternly like a Nordic sacristan. The idea of this solemnity and the arbitrary correction when I had spoken in only the mildest of conversational tones sharpens, shall we say? the sense. I go in to see this masterpiece like a professional music critic at a concert for which he has been obliged to buy his ticket. I will just see for myself, I say, what I think of this picture that the nineteenth century lifted to such pretensions. At the same time I make a pious resolution not to hold this against Raphael. If what seems to us now an epoch of almost cosmic bad taste and nauseous cant proclaimed him, it was necessarily not his fault. And I would not take out on the picture the fanatical reverence or pious fraud that orders people silent before it and me silent at the door, and that affords so perfect an example of the nonsense by which the nature of art is falsified and its problems evaded.

The Sistine Madonna, of course, was painted for the church of Saint Sixtus at Piacenza, the most suave, *chic,* and grand-style little baroque church that could be imagined. Nothing could be created with more style, sophistication and elegance. You must smile to think what horror these worshipers would feel if they saw their Madonna in her proper place. From the Sistine Church the Madonna was sold in 1753 to Augustus III and removed to Dresden.

Everyone knows what this painting looks like, or almost everyone—forty years ago it was as well known to families everywhere as the Bible or the face of Mr. Gladstone. There is the Virgin herself, with the child in her arms, the two adoring saints, one on either side, the clouds, the stretch of landscape half-way up, the two cherubim looking up from the bottom of the scene. It is all so familiar that I can feel no surprise on seeing the Sistine Madonna now for the first time. If it were not for the solemn and special tone of its private room and the look of that row of tourists, worshipers, idlers and resters of aching museum feet, I might have given this picture an honest look and gone on back to some of the wonders scattered through Dresden's very exciting museum. But here I am with this Raphael, so singled out and ritualized, and there in the very next room is a superb Tintoretto and a fair Veronese, and not fifty feet away one of the greatest of all Veroneses, a profound Rubens portrait, Giorgone's Sleeping Venus, one of the best of all Botticelli's and many another of the same high rank. It is all very well to admire the Raphael picture if you like, but you can hardly storm the fort in this style, as if the rest were all mere minions of this hero. Something must be said.

To begin with—taking the picture as painting, not as religion or literature or reminiscence—the composition is single and straight, if you like, but fundamentally dull. The chief figures are well enough placed, but the cherubim are foolish and arbitrary as designs, and those draper's clouds, whose dun solidity makes them the equivalent of figures almost, are beyond words perfunctory. Composition in the sense of a good Michelangelo, Botticelli, El Greco, or Mantegna, this picture has not at all. In color it is stupid and chromo, a little more pleasing near at hand than twenty feet away, but dull enough at best. The landscape, that single band of it across the picture, is pretty but nothing at all compared to similar passages in Perugino, where Raphael got it, or to such elements in a Patinir. Of any play of the brush, as in Veronese or Tintoretto, there is none, though that, of course, would not be expected of Raphael's school. Of distinguished realism, as in Velasquez, there is none. There is a very dull realistic prose method in the plane of Murillo, though not so saccharine—but what shall we say of that spatter of filmy, life-like faces that Raphael has painted for the cherubim around the Madonna, could anything be in poorer taste or flatter style?

The cherubim faces are downright ugly, the infant Jesus equally so. It would be absurd to compare this child to the same little figure in two or three Correggios, lovely spots in poor pictures mostly, or to the divine child in Botticelli. The Madonna herself has a sweet and gentle face, but in this very sweetness she compares very poorly with Bellini, Donatello, Lippo Lippi, Perugino at his best or even with some of Raphael's other Madonnas; just as for profound poetry and foreknowledge she falls below Botticelli's.

I am forced to wonder, even in the face of this foolish and bourgeois atmosphere in which it has to be seen, what has caused the enormous reputation of the Sistine Madonna. You could not put it wholly down to some mediocrity in the picture to which tasteless multitudes can cling, for mediocrity in itself has no such staying power as the Sistine Madonna has evinced. How much of this grandeur and beauty, then, is merely literary, the attribution to the picture of qualities that have been created about it in words? Or, has this picture something of a combination of the commonplace and the universally epic, a mild exaction as art, and as life a certain straightness and humanity of statement that has furnished its appeal?

If I saw the Sistine Madonna for the first time, without ever having heard of it before, I should give it an honest look and see in it influences from the classics via Michelangelo and from Perugino, together with an elaborate baroque gesture and line that would have paralyzed some of the picture's worshipers if it had not been reduced to something plainer and easier by the prose-mindedness of Raphael's realism. As painting it would scarcely interest me at all, compared with many other pictures. As art it would exhibit a certain sweetness and manliness of mind, and an impression of character and ease. Perhaps I might have felt on me the control of its kind of common humanity, a veritable genius of that—perhaps. But if I had been

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told that it was one of the great pictures of the world, I should have felt only a despair at the mystery of what art essentially is, at the lonely gap between the generations of men.

STARK YOUNG.

Meditations on Dostoyevsky

Bad Quarter-Hour of a Literary Critic

AS Dostoyevsky is one of the greatest modern writers, so he is also perhaps the one who may make us most discontented with literature. When one remembers his sadistic obsessions, his complaisance in self-degradation, his extravagant vanity, one begins to feel that the masterpieces of such a man of genius were only a doubtful compensation on paper for the misdeeds and defects of a life. Are not the purity of Dostoyevsky's tenderness, the flights of his Christian idealism, to be measured precisely by the fierceness of his perversity, the subhuman depths of his indifference? Are not the Svidrigailovs and the Stavrogins—those malignant growths which seem to sprout and, almost without the author's intention, to take on such monstrous proportions in Dostoyevsky's novels—are they not the price that one has to pay for the Alyoshas and Prince Myshkins?

But then one remembers the miseries of his life: the neurotic family falling to pieces after the death of the mother; the boy neglected by the drunken father and left without money at his school; the murder of the father, for his cruelty, by the peasants of his own estate; Dostoyevsky arrested for conspiracy and stood up, before the reprieve came, to be shot against a wall; his four years in Siberia, wearing the fetters with murderers and thieves, hauling bricks and pounding alabaster; the subsequent years of servitude as a soldier; and the epilepsy which accompanied all from that first day when, a boy at school, he had been told of the murder of his father. And one remembers that so deep and so painful was his conviction of his own sin that, when he comes to write "The Brothers Karamazov," he shifts to himself the moral responsibility for his father's murder; and though it was for a political offense only that he had been sent to Siberia, he always seems to have felt that in going there he was expiating other crimes with which he had never been charged. And in his books, by heroic effort, an effort never relaxed, which reached its maximum in his last novel just before his death, he had redressed the moral balance of that universe which he had once felt reeling about him with the world of his own soul. In his life among the criminals and their keepers, in the hideous conditions of the prison, as well as in his own anguished soul, he had been forced to live at the closest quarters, both within and without, with the basic contentions and discords, the basic horrifying anomalies, of human life.

And these contentions, anomalies and discords, are they not the provokers of all important literature—treachery, violence, frustration, all the outbreaks of our barbarous nature and the casualties of our endeavors to make our way through the uncomprehended universe? Only such casualties and outbreaks can rouse us from the normal life of non-thinking and non-feeling, the laziness of bodily processes drifting inertly among random and meaningless images, anticipations and memories, giving wide berth by a cunning instinct to problems and tasks. Works of literature are only the product of those collisions with the unknown reality—collisions whose repercussions, when we have withdrawn into the shelter of ourselves, we try to justify, harmonize, account for, to subdue to a smoother rhythm in the current of our thought, now resuming, which for a moment has been shattered and torn. And the individual writer, however detached his intelligence, however rich his imagination, however comprehensive his range, must inevitably produce justification for a particular set of values which enables him to appear as a hero—it must gratify his deepest desires, and even if the hero of his book is defeated in action, he must be morally victorious. Like the instinct which makes us blink our eye when anything approaches it, like the fear which makes us take refuge from a bombardment, the work of art has only the dignity of any other self-protective movement: it is merely one of the necessities for survival. In a work of art, imagination and reason are like the leucocytes of our physical nature which, when an infection has occurred, rush to mass themselves at the breach, ingest the alien elements and arrest the progress of the disease—with this difference, that the works of art, unlike the dead and discharged leucocytes, for some time and under certain conditions, retain their efficacy.

For the harmony, the justification, provided by the work of literature is accepted by the reader as valid. The writer has falsified life, because he has pretended to harmonize something which he is aware of chiefly as confusion and to explain something which he knows he cannot fully understand. His work of art is, therefore, an imposture. But the reader, himself balked and bewildered, receives naïvely the artist's picture as a true representation of the world. The artist, who has been disconcerted and spurred to produce a work of art by his failure to discover in the universe either harmony or logic, supplies the harmony and logic himself; and the reader, who has himself been hungering for logic or harmony, accepts with joy what the artist gives him, and assumes that the artist's makeshift is a certified revelation, and the artist an oracle. The reader leans upon the writer: what for the latter is a vague, a confused, or an approximate form of expression, the former applies literally. All that department of literature which deals directly with current events—editorial-writing, pamphleteering, history, some novel and play writing—is but the painting of the thinnest varnish of a reassuring reason and art over earthquakes which actually take place, not in the world of art and reason, but in the barbarous animal world, bloody, uncontrollable, ignoble—and all the writer can hope for at best is to divert the attention of his fellows, like a bystander at a street accident who, when the rest of the crowd are only gaping, insists upon the removal of the body, or like an actor in a burning theater who tries, by his eloquence or jokes, to avert a panic and stampede. Yet the public, remembering the catchwords, the incantations, of their leaders, may attempt to enforce them as laws; and a bit of rhetoric, uttered in an emergency, will be imposed as a practical program or a philosophic system.

Or the public reaches the point of behaving as if every

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feature of the artist's work were something premeditated and final—writing, for example, after the author is dead, "It was about this period that X, in his attempt to understand his own time, decided that it would first be necessary to understand the career of James G. Blaine, and, finding no satisfactory book on the subject, he set himself to write one," or "It was during his travels in the tropics that the necessity first appeared to Y of a new and chaster form of expression"—when the truth is that the life of Blaine has been merely a piece of hack-work for a publisher, suggested by the publisher himself, and that the baldness of Y's prose in the tropics has been simply the result of enervation produced by the heat. Or what for the writer has represented a furious effort at completeness of understanding, at impersonality of recreation, an effort obstructed, to the writer's despair, by his personal obsessions and mannerisms—his family habits, his physical deficiencies, the limitations of his nation and race, which pursue and exasperate him, like a can tied to a dog's tail—to the public, who know nothing of his aim, it is precisely this personality which they savor and glorify, following with gratified complacency those very lines of least resistance against which the artist has struggled to mount, and delighting in those very stigmata which the artist has strained to efface. So, as it has done with Chekhov and Baudelaire, posterity will piously cherish even a writer's roughest notes, though these may be merely irrelevant excretions, under the pressure of emotions and interests not commemorated in them at all—productions which derive their only vividness from the sharpness of the writer's need to turn his mind away from his troubles of the purse or of the heart to something remote and indifferent—or they may be meaningless mechanical notes, the merest rudimentary twitchings of the literary temperament, made in moments of drunkenness or fatigue, but hungrily saved by the writer's admirers for their infinitesimal drops of some peculiar personal color, no more significant or precious in itself than the color of his eyes or his hair. And from these notes they may construct a system, which they support with the authority of the writer, but which the writer could never have accepted—just as in the case of the ancient poets, where the text is fragmentary or corrupt, Æschylus seems to us all the more awful and all the more oracular because, not knowing precisely what he wrote, we do not know precisely what he means; and Sappho all the more divine because there is so little of her left.

Nor are the public readers merely: they are also writers who imitate the author. One imagines movements in literature as sweeping through the minds of men like the wind that ripples the wheat; but would it not be a good deal more accurate to liken a literary movement to the collapse of a row of dominoes, of which only the first has felt the shock, the shock from the unknown reality, and the others have merely toppled over, receiving it at second hand? Till, at last, the original composer of the harmony, the original inventor of the system, catches from the minds of the public themselves, who have themselves accepted it from him, a new belief in the all-embracing, the all-satisfying character of that pattern, in the finality of those conclusions, which, when he had originally put them forth, seemed tentative and incomplete. As we become used to the writer, however, and our first delight in his peculiar color, in his peculiar music or flavor, has commenced to wear off, then the familiar *malaise* assails us: we begin to become aware, beneath the novel and attractive surface, of the grievances, the diseases, the insane preoccupations, of the straining incomplete human being—all those anomalies and discords from which, in going to the work of art, we had originally hoped to escape; and in the end, the public of readers, when it has found out the weaknesses and falsities of the system which once enchanted it—when perhaps it has tried to realize some vision which, like the aggressive morality of Nietzsche, the inventor has imagined in his bed—will denounce the writer with scorn and repudiate all he has written.

Yet, beyond the work of the individual writer, the subject may also be regarded from the point of view of the concerted general effort, the great universal convention, the great universal imposture, of literature itself, in which, by continually reading and writing, by the mastery of countless formulæ, we are finally, as writers or readers, enabled to pretend to live. It is perhaps in the classics themselves that we find the supreme example of the imposture of literature. How often has one heard Sophocles played off against the harshness or cynicism of some modern writer of tragedy! He has become the perfect exemplar of classic wisdom and calm, the touchstone for modern turbulence. Yet in what work of a modern dramatist has the harshness of the dramas of Sophocles ever been surpassed? One remembers the violent tempers of the family of Œdipus, the quarrel of Œdipus himself with the father whom he does not recognize, over a casual encounter on the road; his savage threats to the aged Tiresias; the passionate directness of all his gestures. And does the Œdipus of Colonus breathe the spirit of sweetness and peace with which its reputation credits it? Is the old and broken Œdipus a figure of mellow forgiveness? Surely his ferocious cursing of his sons is one of the harshest scenes in literature—nor is the species of divine electrocution with which Sophocles finally disposes of him a gentle or tranquillizing close to a distressing situation. And those precious sons who fight for the kingdom and finally destroy each other! And the passionate obstinacy of Creon, so like the passionate obstinacy of Œdipus—and so like the passionate obstinacy of Antigone! These people are, in their way, as narrowly egotistic as the characters in Ibsen, but more quarrelsome and more virulent. Those denunciations and defiances are the most stirring scenes in Sophocles: it may be said that Sophocles' world is to be seen at its most characteristic when his characters are most intemperate. Is there, in fact, from the point of view of horror and barbarity, much to choose between Sophocles and Dostoyevsky himself? There they are, the old hideous discords—Œdipus killing his father, the old Karamazov murdered by his sons, that ferocious and inevitable turning upon the beings who have given us life, which is one of the perpetual scandals of the world! And are not Stavrogin's rape, Myshkin's epilepsy and Zossima's putrefaction, quite matched by Œdipus' incest, Philoctetes' ulcer and Polyneices' corpse? If even the form of Sophocles is more chastened than Dostoyevsky's, his spirit is more astringent.

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His superior equanimity—if, indeed, it really exists—must be partly the calm of old age. If, as is supposed, all the surviving plays of Sophocles were written when the poet was between the ages of fifty-five and ninety—then the pedants of all the world have been attempting to make us accept as a prerequisite discipline for any creative attempt a detachment and a technical accomplishment which very few artists of our own race can hope even to live long enough, and to keep the necessary vigor, to attain. The old man in Plato's dialogue tells how Sophocles, when he had been asked whether old age had made him incapable of love, had replied that the coming of old age was like the deliverance from an insane and cruel master: was this the saying of a calm and gentle nature? And what of the calmness of even that old age?—what of the mellowness and peace of the spirit which, in the second Œdipus, poured forth such a terrible diatribe against old age itself?—"unfriended, feeble, chided, unfit for company, the crowning ill of all—not to be born is best, but once we have seen the light, it is better to go soon." How did Matthew Arnold know that "from first youth tested up to extreme old age," "passion" had never made Sophocles "wild"?

Yet so great is the need of humanity to believe in a human mind all self-controlled and all-wise that there has been superimposed on the plays of that great master of hatred and horror a legend which now disguises them—so that a solemn, mediocre don, like Professor Jebb, laboring day after day at his desk, explaining, interpreting, translating every surviving word of the poet, sometimes altering his words, has pared Sophocles down, sapped his power, ironed him out to marmoreal smoothness, reducing the heavy rhythm with its mighty pulse of blood which pauses not even at the end of lines, but tides along from one to another the contractions of swift spoken speech, to a tongue that could never have been spoken, and congealing angry cataracts of consonants to colorless pediments of prose—the British don, after centuries of critics, supplies us finally with what men of letters—and what all mankind—have desired: a writer superhuman and humanly impossible, a writer who could never have existed, but a writer of impeccable technique and imperturbable moral balance, a writer who could never be supplanted and never be outgrown, a writer unassailable, a classic!

So we have set up the myth of the classics: from the written remains of humanity, of beings outraged and wondering like ourselves, the mirage has been projected of a fortress of absolute wisdom and beauty, into which the educated man may retreat, upon whose safety he may rely. And there are also those other efforts, efforts characteristic of our time, to attain to an absolute beauty, an art altogether independent of the appetites and worries of humanity—paintings "representing" nothing, "pure poetry" purged of ideas: both, in reality, merely assimilations, on the part of the other arts, to the pattern and rhythm of music—which itself has been desperately straining (in those composers who name their productions after trigonometrical figures and the integral calculus) to assimilate itself to mathematics. As if there could be said to be anything absolute or pure about such exercises as the arts, which are merely pleasing arrangements of sensations, and, therefore, irremediably dependent on the senses which we have clumsily evolved to meet our needs, to find our way through the jungle of nature! And if the art which derives from our hearing seems to us purer than the others, it is merely that we perceive in the region of sound divorced from speech so much more limited a field than through images or words! These crude games, so much the play of our bodies, of our primary animal life, that neither stories, poems, drama nor music—not even argumentation, not Euclid's geometry even, which reaches a climax, like a Greek play, with the square on the hypotenuse—have been able to liberate themselves from the type of our reproductive processes—so that one has always either, as in Greek plays, to work up to a climax toward the end and then gently and briefly subside, or, as in our modern ones, to work up to a climax and then abruptly cease. One thinks of the heat of Catullus and Keats, the mounting excitement of Dante; the even unimpassioned glow of homosexual writers, from Plato to André Gide; the blank stretches where the climaxes should be in the novels of Henry James. And one reflects also that between the sexes there can be no real common norm of judgment in matters of literature and art—men and women are each tied to their stakes; they can only turn in a circle about them. What critic can really pretend to judge the work of men and women side by side? Or, for that matter, the work of different races, or even of different nations—of different periods, generations, each with its own adjustment to make to the world which pursues and presses it, each with its own particular casualties, its own particular discords, which to be easy it must resolve? Or even of different individuals! How ridiculous the pretensions of the critic, who can, at best, but make his own adjustments, reconcile his own anomalies!

What a discrepancy—worst of all—between the personal point of view of the writer and the convention of literature. What a gulf between the self which experiences and the self which writes. Where is the sense or the satisfaction of "moments of emotion remembered in tranquillity"?—as if there could ever be anything in common, as if there could ever be any harmony, between our moments of tranquillity and our moments of pain!

EDMUND WILSON.

Harvest

The year turns to its rest.
Up from the earth, the fields, the early fallen dew,
Moves the large star of autumn, Arcturus perfect-pointed,
And summer calls with its many voices upon the frost.
I who have not seen for weeping
The plum ripen and fall or the yellowing sheaf
Am not unmindful now of the season that came and went,
The hours that told off sweetness,
The bud, and the rich leaf.
Though I turned aside before the summer,
And weathered but a season of the mind,
Let me sit among you when the husk is stripped,
Let me learn of the bright grain
How I labored in an acre of cloud and reaped the wind.

LÉONIE ADAMS.

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Individual and the Group

SIR: Much that has appeared in your columns concerning the relation of the individual to the group has no doubt attracted the attention of New Republic readers. And now comes the last of a series of articles by Waldo Frank on "The Re-Discovery of America," with all its luminous disclosures:

> With tragic need [the writer insists] America needs groups. Groups to capture our chaos as consciousness captures the sense. . . . The method of American life must be the group. Why have we no groups? Why have all the efforts, since America began, to form real groups failed always?

For the writer knows, as we all know, that we have failed; and this failure he ascribes to the incapacity of modern man—with his overwhelming sense of ego—to relate himself to the Whole. And no one, to my thinking, has analyzed as clearly as Mr. Frank the tragedy of this failure. For he sees in the "aloneness" of the individual—O shades of Proust and Wilder!—his unconscious anguish. But out of the agony of a loneliness which men endure in silence is born—the Group. For:

> having accepted mortal loneliness, they will grow aware of other men in the American chaos (if there is one there will be more): others, in their way, living the same life. They will flare little fires to each other. They will draw close; they will commune and converge. They will create a group. And this will be a group that can live.

As to a method, Mr. Frank assumes that we are ready to adopt one as a means to a desired end.

> We know what we want: men who will act as conscious integers of the Whole and who will thereby create it. Create it in our America, which is the paradigm of the world.

And again:

> By analogy I must begin by observing myself, *as within the Whole.* I must begin humbly, like the Buddhist or the Jew, with their method; else I shall not begin at all.

In these, and similar significant phrases, Mr. Frank outlines his thought. Do not those who accept this thought constitute already —though unknown to each other—a group? It is a group without leadership or organization, for it would be premature to formulate a theory of life that is but dimly realized, and that must first of all be grasped by the individual himself. We cannot, I infer, seek guidance or reckon on the support of numbers, at the present stage of the experiment. And we know very little—only that we have tried, that we have failed, and that we are beginning again. But there is stimulation in the thought that a spark has been lighted:

> It is at best a spark—from my own efforts to make light for myself—wherewith to light your lantern. But though the result alone is of importance, let us never forget that it will never come through mere contemplation, argument and prayer; nor through mere intellectual study. The complacence of our pride moves me to this emphasis. . . . If man is to be more than a passive mode of Life, long-suffering and momently agleam (as are other creatures in their way) with an entire splendor, he must begin to act. He must have a method for acting at least as competent as his methods for building bridges.

Courage, courage—*frisch zu!*

HENRIETTA R. PALMER.

Chattanooga, Tenn.

The Underpaid Librarian

SIR: The 1,200 staff employees of the public libraries of Greater New York entreat your attention to a condition which critically affects not only their personal interests but the future of the entire metropolitan library system.

The Board of Estimate and Apportionment is about to make the City Budget for 1929, and one of the questions which it will consider will be the request of the trustees of the New York Public Libraries for an increase in pay for library workers. The addition requested amounts to an average of $3.63 per week per employee. This increase is sorely needed, and the librarians are hoping to be able to influence the Board by enlisting the sympathetic aid of those who are interested in books and therefore appreciative of the highly technical service librarians render both the research worker and the general public.

Present conditions tend to impair the efficiency of the library and the morale of the loyal workers. Compared with other professional workers in the city's employ, the librarians of the public library, perhaps because of their comparatively small numbers, are at a distinct disadvantage. For example, the teachers with a corresponding degree of training and experience in their profession average about 50 percent higher salaries. A librarian at the public library, who has been twelve years in the service, may receive $2,040 per annum. A public school teacher of like experience is assured, by a system of graduated pay increases, of $3,144, even if she does not advance beyond the lowest salary schedule. A high school librarian would receive $3,000. In addition both the teacher and the high school librarian (Board of Education employees) are assured of pensioned retirement, but no pension system is provided for the staff of the public library. Besides her longer working hours, the public librarian's duty calls for night work, and her vacation is less than half that of a teacher!

As a result of this condition, many of the most competent librarians, after a year or two of practical experience in the New York public libraries, seek employment where the immediate compensation is higher and where there is greater prospect of advancement as well. As staff librarians they are acutely aware that if they continue in the service they are approaching the following impasse: the highest position in the graded service is that of branch librarian. There are today 91 branch libraries and the 91 branch librarians in charge average more than 23 years in the service. Their average wage is only $45 per week; the highest they can attain is $52 per week; and these are at the top of the graded service! They can advance no further, except by appointment to one of a handful of executive positions. The library staff includes in its rolls about sixty employees eligible for retirement, but there is no pension system! . . .

New York City. LOUISE P. BULL.

Johnsoniana (Andrew) Wanted

SIR: May I ask if you will be good enough to print this letter asking any of your readers who have diaries, old letters, and memoranda concerning Andrew Johnson, if they would communicate with the undersigned? I am gathering material for a book on the five fateful years of Andrew Johnson's life from 1864 to 1869, and would appreciate any loans of such material as could be had.

In addition, I am anxious to secure similar information as to Thaddeus Stevens, Jeremiah Sullivan Black, Theodore Tilton, Reverdy Johnson, and other of the principal actors in the impeachment drama.

GEORGE FORT MILTON.

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Dorothy Osborne's Letters

The Letters of Dorothy Osborne to William Temple. Edited by G. C. Moore-Smith. New York: Oxford University Press. 325 pages. $8.

IT IS pleasant to find the Clarendon Press putting its fine print and paper at the service of Dorothy Osborne, and Mr. Moore-Smith bestowing on her such scholarship and devotion that there is scarcely a date lacking where dates were very dubious and scarcely a reference left obscure where references were very elusive. Thus she enters among the classics. Thus a new generation confirms the insight of Judge Parry by whose perspicacity her letters were first brought to light, and proves the truth of Macaulay's contention that "the mutual relations of the two sexes seem to us to be at least as important as the mutual relations of any two governments in the world." Dorothy Osborne indeed has a twofold claim upon our sympathy. She was the heroine of what she called a "romance story," for she loved William Temple and they were poor and they were separated and were united at last; and she was also a woman of charm enough and of wit enough to make us read her letters for the sheer pleasure of reading them.

In our day, no doubt, a Dorothy Osborne with Dorothy Osborne's gift for writing would have written books. In her day—she was born in 1627 and died in 1694—the thought of a woman writing a book had something monstrous about it. Only madcaps like the crazy Duchess of Newcastle wrote books. "Sure the poore woman is a little distracted" was Dorothy's comment upon the authoress. "If I should not sleep this fortnight, I should not come to that." Women's art was the art of letter writing, an occupation one could carry on at odd moments, by a father's sick bed, among a thousand interruptions, anonymously as it were, and often with the pretense that it served some useful purpose. Into these innumerable letters, for the most part irretrievably lost, to our great impoverishment, went those powers of observation and wit that were later to take rather a different shape in "Evelina" and "Pride and Prejudice." The women letter writers were the true forerunners of the women novelists. Without any special education, Dorothy had clear views upon the art of letter writing. " . . . great Schollers are not the best writer's (of letters I mean, of books perhaps they are) . . . all letters mee thinks should be free and easy as one's discourse." Indeed, she was in agreement with an old uncle of hers, who threw his standish at his secretary's head for saying "put pen to paper" instead of simply "wrote." Later, it is true, with the Bible and Shakespeare running in her head, she reflects that there is a difference between the spoken word and what can be written even in a letter. " . . . many pritty things shuffled together" do better spoken than in a letter.

And so we come by a form of literature, if Dorothy Osborne will let us call it so, easy yet formal, which is different from any other, and which we may well regret now that it is gone from us, as true letter writing seems gone from us, for ever. For Dorothy Osborne, as she filled her great sheets with this fine prose, gave us a record of life seen from the chimney corner day in and day out, and imparted freely to a public of one. In such a manner and to such an audience, things can be said with an ease and intimacy that the novelist can never know. She gossips, she tells a story, she makes love, she reflects. Since it is her business to keep her lover informed of what passes in her home, she must sketch the solemn Sir Justinian Isham —*Sir Soloman Justinian she calls him—the pompous widower*, with four daughters and a great gloomy house in Northamptonshire, who wished to marry her. "Lord what would I give that I had a Lattin letter of his for you," she exclaims, in which he gave an Oxford friend a character of her, specially commending her that she was "capable of being company and conversation for him"; she must sketch her Cousin Molle waking up one morning in fear of the dropsy and taking coach in a hurry to his doctor in Cambridge; and describe rhapsodically the lovely Lady Diana Rich whose mind was even more charming than her body. Any gossip that comes her way is sent on to amuse her lover. Lady Sunderland, for instance, has condescended to marry plain Mr. Smith, who treats her like a princess, which Sir Justinian thinks a bad example for wives. But Lady Sunderland tells everyone she married him out of pity, and that, Dorothy comments, "was the pittyfull'st sayeing that ever I heard." Soon we have picked up enough about her friends to relish any further addition to the portraits that are forming in her mind's eye. Indeed, our glimpses of the society of Bedfordshire in the seventeenth century are all the more intriguing because we never know whether Sir Justinian will pop in again or whether Lady Diana cured the eyes that had slain so many, or what became of Mr. Smith and his lady. In they come and out they go, for all the world like living people. But with all this intermittency the letters, like the letters of born letter writers, provide their own continuity. They make us feel soon that we have our seat at the center of the pageant, in the depths of Dorothy's mind, which unfolds itself page by page as we read. For she possessed indisputably the gift which counts for more in letter writing than wit or brilliance or traffic with great people; she gave herself away merely by being herself without a word of emphasis or analysis, and thus envelops all these odds and ends in the mesh of her own personality. It was a character both original and attractive. Phrase by phrase we come closer into touch with it.

Of the womanly virtues that befitted her age we hear indeed very little. She says nothing of sewing or of baking. She was perhaps a little indolent by temperament. She browsed casually on vast French romances. She roamed the commons, loitered to hear the milkmaids singing their ballads, and walked her garden by night smelling sweet scented jasmine and wishing that Temple were with her. She was apt to fall silent and sit dreaming over the fire, inattentive to what was said, till some talk of flying, perhaps, roused her, and she made her brother laugh by asking what they were saying about flying, for the thought had struck her, would that she could fly to London and be with Temple! This pensive strain was dominant in rousing her to a sense of fortune and its tyranny, making her feel the vanity of things, and the littleness of man, and the uselessness of effort. A vein of melancholy and some turn for letters ran, it seems, in the family. Her sister, she notes, who had "a great deal of Witt and was thought to write as well as most Women in England . . . was a melancholy retir'd woman and besydes the company of her husband and her book's never sought any," and again she quotes her mother, "whoe (if it may be allow'd mee to say it) was counted as wise a woman as most in England"—telling her "I have lived to see that 'tis almost impossible to think People worse than they are and soe will you." Dorothy, indeed, had to assuage her spleen by drinking water that steel had been stood in, and by visiting the wells at Epsom.

With all this melancholy her humor naturally took the

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form of irony rather than of wit. She loved to mock her lover, and to pour a fine raillery over the pomps and ceremonies of existence. Pride of birth she laughed at. Pompous old men were fine subjects for her satire. A dull sermon moved her to laughter. She saw through fine clothes and fine speeches to the greed or the snobbery beneath. But with this fastidiousness went a fear of ridicule, a hatred of publicity almost morbid in their intensity. The interference of a brother or an aunt under the guise of affection exasperated her. "I would live in a hollow Tree," she said, "to avoyde them." A husband kissing his wife in public seemed to her as "ill a sight as one would wish to see." Though she disdained the good opinion of the world and cared no more for their praise of her wit or beauty than "whether they think my name Eliz: or Dor:" any gossip about her private life set her in a quiver. A faithful friend, a moderate fortune, a retired life—those were the ends of her ambition.

Thus, when it came to action, when it came to proving in the eyes of the world the depth and the tenderness of her love, to which her dreams by night and her thoughts by day bore witness, she could not bring herself to do it. There was a timidity, a deep-seated fear of ridicule in her which made her afraid to risk censure by marrying a penniless man like Temple. "I confesse that I have an humor will not suffer mee to Expose myself to People's Scorne," she wrote. Clear-sighted as she was, and unworldly, she shrank from any extravagance that could draw the eyes of the gossips upon her. It was a weakness for which Temple had sometimes to reprove her. For Temple's character emerges more and more clearly—it is a proof of Dorothy's gift as a correspondent. A good letter writer so takes the color of his correspondent that from reading the one we can imagine the other. As she argues, as she reasons, we hear Temple almost as clearly as we hear Dorothy herself. He was in many ways the opposite of her. He drew out her melancholy by rebutting it. He made her defend her dislike of marriage by opposing it. Temple, it is clear, though but one of his letters to her remains, was by far the more positive and resolute of the two. Yet there is perhaps something a little hard, a little conceited in him, that justified her brother's dislike of him. Henry Osborne, though his jealous love for his sister and his desire for her worldly advantage make him a partial witness, called him, Dorothy says, the "proudest imperious insulting ill-natured man that ever was." But to Dorothy undoubtedly Temple had qualities that none of her other suitors possessed. He was not a mere country gentleman; nor a pompous justice of the peace; nor a pedantic lawyer; nor a town gallant making love to every woman he met; nor a traveled Monsieur; nor, in short, was he in any way a fool. For had he been any one of these things, Dorothy, with her quick sense of the ridiculous, would have dispatched him instantly. Some charm he had, some fineness of sympathy which lets her write to him whatever comes into her head, sense or nonsense, and makes her feel herself at her best with him. He was a man of taste, too, and could praise her letters so as to give her, who disliked praise mostly, some of the joys of fame. No two people, it would seem, were better fitted to marry each other. Yet suddenly she declared that marry him she would not.

The passion which inspires marriage is the most vile and tyrannical of our senses, she argued. Passion had made Lady Anne Blount the "talk of all the footmen and Boy's in the street." Passion had been the undoing of the lovely Lady Izabella—what should she do with beauty now, married to "that beast with all his estate?" If people knew each other before marriage there would be no more marrying, she thought. Indeed, torn asunder by her brother's anger, by Temple's jealousy and that queer shrinking of hers at the thought of the world's laughter, she wished for nothing but to be left to herself and to find "an early, and a quiet grave." That Temple overcame her scruples and overrode her brother's ill will is much to the credit of his character. Yet it is an act that we can scarcely help deploring. Married to Temple, Dorothy wrote no more. Perhaps she was too happy; perhaps she was too dull. All is open to conjecture, for with a reticence that became her well, Lady Temple said nothing.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

An Embittered Diplomat

Heading for the Abyss: Reminiscences, by Prince Lichnowsky. New York: Payson and Clarke, Ltd. 471 pages. $7.50.

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY'S post-war formula for preventing the world catastrophe is simple. Germany should have abandoned the entangling alliance with Austria and renewed the Re-insurance Treaty with Russia; or better still, the Dictator (Bismarck) should not have committed the initial error of allying with Austria in 1879, instead of keeping friendship with Russia. Furthermore, Germany in the twentieth century should have followed the wise advice of Prince Lichnowsky and should have cooperated with the pacific Sir Edward Grey in a conference of ambassadors; this would have averted a European War in 1914 as it averted it during the Balkan Wars of the two preceding years.

There is a modicum of truth and wisdom in this simple formula. The only trouble is that Prince Lichnowsky is completely blind to all the difficulties in its execution—to the *revanche* feeling in France after 1871, to Pan-Slavism, to Russia's "historic mission" to control Constantinople and the Straits, and to the militarist influence at St. Petersburg. He says little or nothing of Poincaré and Izvolski, or of the ultra-suspicious and almost morbid anti-German influence of Sir Eyre Crowe at the British Foreign Office. We hear, instead, of Sir Edward Grey's sweetness of nature and single-minded efforts for the peace of Europe, and of Prince Lichnowsky's own wise advice, which was thwarted by officials in Berlin, who were either "pathological or oinological," and who were jealous of the Prince's social and political successes in London.

Considerably more than half of this volume is a reprint of the author's diplomatic despatches from London, which have already appeared in the forty-volume German publication, "Die Grosse Politik," or in the so-called "Kautsky Documents." While some of the despatches are here conveniently rendered into English for the first time, no careful student will be content to use Prince Lichnowsky's edition, because of its incompleteness and of the bias in his selection of material. He omits, for instance, some hundred despatches during the spring of 1913 dealing with Balkan affairs; of the scores of telegrams and letters which he sent concerning the Bagdad Railway question, he gives us only two. But there is no indication of all these omissions, such as would have been easily detected if he had also printed the serial numbers of his despatches, as is done in "Die Grosse Politik," from which he has culled this material. Furthermore, to influence or deceive the uninitiated, he introduces italics which do not appear in the original despatch, and he occasionally omits paragraphs without

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printing dots to indicate the omission. His aim is to prove, by an apparent appeal to documentary evidence, that he alone was right and all the Wilhelmstrasse officials were wrong.

The remainder of the volume comprises a reprint of his famous pamphlet of 1918, "My Mission to London," and various other short essays and thoughts which he committed to paper after his return from London to Germany in 1914. They discuss diplomacy and democracy, Germany's relations to Russia, the folly of dividing up large landed estates (like his own in Silesia), the advisability of a unitary instead of a federal form of government for Germany, and Bismarck's follies as Lichnowsky sees them reflected in the recent memoirs of von Schleinitz, former German ambassador at St. Petersburg. In a brief essay on "England before the War," Lichnowsky noted on August 17, 1914, what then appeared to him England's reasons for entering the War. But this was subjected to numerous alterations in view of publication in 1927, his purpose apparently being to cut out passages which might give offense to the German people today, and to emphasize his own role as wise prophet. These alterations, however, some of which are indicated by the translator, rob it somewhat of its otherwise historical value as a nearly contemporary impression of English policy in 1914.

When he returned from England, Prince Lichnowsky desired further diplomatic employment. Instead, as diplomatic openings for Germans were a little limited after July, 1914, he was attached to von Kluck's army. But after a few months his caustic condemnation of German policy made him an uncongenial colleague, and he was retired to his Silesian estates. He himself was subjected to bitter criticism for not having kept England out of the War. Much of this criticism was unjust, but it got on the Prince's nerves to such an extent that it has affected the flavor of all his writings. In particular it impelled him to write his now famous pamphlet, "My Mission to London." He had several copies typewritten for circulation among his relatives and friends. He naïvely supposed that it would be kept secret. But one of his friends thought it could be turned to Germany's advantage, and so it got printed in Switzerland. It was at once reprinted in many languages as excellent propaganda against Germany. It was an exposition of the formula set forth in the first paragraph above. Instead of its gaining him adherents in Germany, it led to his being censured by the Prussian House of Lords.

Another *idée fixe,* to which Prince Lichnowsky frequently recurs, seems not to have a word of truth in it. It is that his negotiation of the Anglo-German arrangement for the contingent disposition of the Portuguese colonies was deliberately prevented from final signature because Herr von Stumm in the German Foreign Office wished to rob Lichnowsky of the personal prestige of securing a friendly agreement with England. Stumm, he thinks, was ambitious for the London ambassadorship for himself. Lichnowsky even hints that Bethmann-Hollweg was jealous of his London successes, and was afraid that Lichnowsky was aspiring to displace him as German Chancellor. This egocentric, almost pathological, attitude also finds expression in his assumed ignorance of the reasons for his own appointment. "The real reason why the choice fell on me for the London post I am unable to tell you. It certainly cannot have been because of my abilities, since of these the Foreign Office did not avail itself. Was it perhaps on account of my incompetence? Hardly, for had that been the case they would have thought of me sooner. . . . The Wise Men put their heads together. They found that they had run out of greybeards and had no really senile candidates in stock. What was to be done? Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, whose brilliant career had aroused no little amazement among his friends," then happened to think of Lichnowsky among his cabbages and corn in Silesia.

The true reason for Germany's delaying to sign the treaty with England concerning the Portuguese colonies was not Stumm's jealousy or Bethmann's personal motives, but Sir Edward Grey's insistence that the agreement, if signed, should be published. Though he had kept secret for years the Anglo-German and Anglo-Portuguese Treaties of 1898 and 1899, he now insisted that these treaties must be published along with the new treaty, because he could not make secret treaties unknown to Parliament and the public. Germany, however, did not want immediate publication, because the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1899 virtually nullified the Anglo-German Treaty of 1898, and their publication was likely to lead the German public to criticize their government for making a treaty which England had virtually nullified within a few months. Another German objection to immediate publication was fear of Portuguese resentment and injury to German investments in the Portuguese colonies.

The real reason for Lichnowsky's appointment, of which he gives so innocent and sarcastic a version, is probably to be found in an article which he published in July, 1912, and which he carefully refrains from including in this volume. This justified the building of the German navy. The article caught the fancy of the Kaiser, who scribbled in pencil an offer of the London post, which Bethmann then took to Lichnowsky in Silesia. The growth of the German naval menace was one of the main causes of Anglo-German friction and hostility. It was a subject which Lichnowsky carefully avoided throughout his stay at London.

Prince Lichnowsky's volume is more valuable as a source for the study of the psychology of a disappointed and embittered diplomat and gentleman-farmer than of the origins of the World War.

SIDNEY B. FAY.

Grimhaven

Grimhaven, by Robert Joyce Tasker. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 241 pages. $3.

IS a book written by a prisoner about prison life literature or sociology? When Brieux or Ibsen writes plays about social diseases, is he performing the functions of the dramatist, or of the sociologist? The question would not, of course, arise if it were not for the persistent voice of certain critics who demand that literature shall somehow be evaluated apart from its social milieu. (How literature is thus to be abstracted and purified remains forever a mystery.)

Robert Joyce Tasker is an inmate of San Quentin prison. His environment has changed, suddenly, dramatically. At first his conscious life appears to disintegrate, but at the same time all of his senses function with new acuteness. He assimilates his grim surroundings through the senses. And then, almost as suddenly as the change in outward circumstances, comes the inward need for expression. He discovers the self which has been submerged by intensified sense-perceiving. He becomes aware of himself, not merely as a moving, responding

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organism, but as a reflective being. And because he lives and has his being in a circumscribed environment, he utilizes that environment to open doors and windows into this new self. He achieves levels of introspection seldom surpassed in literature. He is inside looking in—into the essence of his personality. What he relates is grim, realistic, terrible. The facts of his narrative are more telling, more penetrating than the whole of literal prison-reform writing. The method employed is truly, at times superlatively, literary. Perhaps the secret of esthetics lies precisely in this sort of integration of medium and method.

On page fifty-three he writes:

> Realists, dissecting the mentalities of criminals, announced that felons were incapable of tender feelings. Still, for all that reason assured me there was no love, and further that I had no capacity for it if such a hypothetical thing existed, I could not deny that part of me was crying out for tenderness. And there was no love in anything about me; not, at least, love of the sort I had been trained to recognize. I went on, however; the blind and unreasoning side of me searching for expression. I worked at my molding-machine in the furniture factory, and while I worked, my reason was lulled to sleep. Amazingly, affection began to surge up in me for my machine.

What more could one ask of literature than is contained in this short paragraph? Here is the outward circumstance sharply etched; here is reason's interpolation for our animal existence; and here also is the necessary, appropriate, inner reflection. Objectivism and subjectivism are synthesized; sensing, feeling, and thinking are brought to wholeness. And, although Tasker is still a youth in years, he brings the same searching method to bear when looking for himself in others. He describes a "natural guard" in these terms:

> At a glance I caught the steely resilience in his body and carriage; with ease he stood erect, alert. The tan military uniform he wore seemed to enhance the effect. The officer's cap with the steep-pitched visor set forward on his brow, not jauntily, but confidently. His eyes were of the alive, deep brown that appears black—fiery black. His nose was aquiline. His moustache close-cropped. He stood on a small island of concrete, a great teakwood cane in his hand. He eyed every man in the line as it filed past him, and eyes dropped before his gaze.

Hamsun's "Hunger" and Keyserling's "Travel Diary of a Philosopher" come to mind as suitable comparatives. Tasker lacks Hamsun's concentration, his power of sustained mood, but he is far less superficial and discursive than Keyserling. He uses introspective method in much the same manner as both of these, but there is still an important difference. He does not particularize with the same motive as does Hamsun, and his generalizations fall far inside the circle of Keyserling's. His awareness of himself partakes more of the method employed by Meredith in "The Egoist." Tasker is, however, less concerned about consequences; his focus is always dual: he observes at one and the same time the social process in which he moves and its concurrent reflection in a process which goes on within himself. What goes on is more significant than any consummation. In this respect he uses the introspective method as one might have expected Americans to use it once they had achieved sufficient insight and courage to gaze within as well as without. His book is, it seems to me, a promise and a clue—a promise of something more profound in American letters and a clue to that emotional-intellectual synthesis which must arrive before our literature takes on form and substance. Whether Tasker himself can fulfill his promise depends, of course, upon his ability to absorb, assimilate, and integrate larger aspects of American life.

E. C. LINDEMAN.

Gongorism

Gongorism and the Golden Age, by Elisha K. Kane. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 275 pages. $3.50.

DR. ELISHA K. KANE dislikes everything in art that is mannered, distorted, illogical or obscure. In particular he dislikes Gongora's poems, which were the subject of the thesis he presented, while at Harvard, to the Division of Modern Languages. The same thesis is now issued with revisions for a wider public. In one of the curious drawings with which he seeks to soften its pedantry, Dr. Kane represents himself as a mounted warrior, with a mortarboard for a helmet and a pen instead of a lance, attacking a dragon whose head is that of Don Luis de Gongora y Argote. The dragon clutches a naked woman, probably symbolizing Beauty or Art. . . .

However, this Knight of the Mortarboard does not confine himself to attacking the gongorism which once held the art of Spanish poetry in thrall. He finds the same dangerous quality, first in the literature of other countries, next in the music, painting, architecture and sculpture of sixteenth-century Spain, and finally in all the arts of our own age. "The present," he declaims, "with its spasmodic epilepsies of free verse, jazz, cubism, futurism, post-impressionism, and various other ultra 'gongorisms,' would deceive us into believing that Western art was really in its infancy, instead of uttering already, and only too plainly, its ugly death rattle." It is for us, O poets of the death-bed, to go a-rattling on. As for Dr. Kane, I find it very curious that his own style, with its far-flung metaphors, its plays on words, its occasional lapses in grammar and its Latinized vocabulary, should be of a type known justly as gongoristic.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Fiction Notes

The Babyons, by Clemence Dane. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $5.

"THE BABYONS" is called "the chronicle of a family," through five generations, from mid-eighteenth to the twentieth century. In the four episodes which define the career of the family, Miss Dane has caught delightfully the color and tone of the successive periods, Georgian, Late Georgian, Early Victorian and Edwardian. The central theme which runs through the narrative, the ancestral fate which follows the Babyons, she maintains with variations according to the manners of the several periods. Thus the story of Sir James and Menella is Gothic in the incursion of the supernatural, after the fashion set by Horace Walpole; the story of Ludovic and Isabella is high romance in its mingling of passion and crime, the mood of "The Bride of Lammermoor"; the story of Creeping Jenny is the romance of common life,

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"One revolutionary physician.—In a recent issue of The Nation, Mary Reed writes intelligently on Soviet Health and says: 'It is a rule of Soviet medicine that every doctor shall be a teacher as well as a healer.' Dr. Liber, more than any other physician in America, fulfills this humanistic conception most completely. . . . It is alarming to realize how few critics within its own ranks the regular medical profession has produced. . . . How pleasant and astonishing it is to find one medicine man (who believes very little in medicine) speaking out so lucidly and courageously as Dr. Liber does in this altogether enlightening and delightfully readable book. 'The Healers' might be characterized as a sociological novel with an autobiographical slant. When I try to answer the question as to what is the beautiful merit of this fine work I seem to think of the quality of sincerity as somehow nestling in every living part of it. Such flaming sincerity produces a kind of dramatic and poetic effect that many a more literary handling of material cannot create.

"Dr. Liber's mind cannot fit into any of the familiar medical grooves, regular or irregular, for the sufficient reason that a mind capable of sustained criticism and sincerity and humility can never fit into any of the traditional and conventional molds. To one who has any residual doubts about the quality of mind and heart present among our professional groups, let him read, for the sake of dramatic contrast, this touching and intelligent book. The only other kindred work I am acquainted with which can at all compare with 'The Healers' is the profoundly human 'Memoirs of a Physician' by Veressaieff. Dr. Liber's sociological novel is quite as human and much richer in knowledge and information and critical episode.

"As the sincerest of anarchists, Liber yet knows how to extend the hand of fellowship to the Soviet Republic. He cannot share the provincialism and egocentricity of the typical anarchist. As a doctor he is simultaneously interested in organic medicine, psychotherapy, education, art, and most impressively of all, in humanity. I doubt whether there is any other person in or out of the medical profession in these materialistic States who has served the humble so generously, so cordially, so understandingly.

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in the manner of Dickens; the last is realistic, modern. The four together plot the course of English fiction during the entire period. And in the first three at least, Miss Dane has surpassed her predecessors by bringing present-day methods to reënforce their primitive resources. She has accomplished a *tour de force* in the art of fiction, and has written as well a story of compelling interest. The publishers emphasize the artistic conception of the novel by presenting it in four exquisite little volumes. They should share in the applause.

R. M. L.

Ryder, by Djuna Barnes. New York: Horace Liveright. $3.

MISS BARNES is described on the jacket of "Ryder" as a revoltée; it is difficult to discover against what tenet of traditional English literature her revolt is directed. The story of Wendell Ryder, his gallant old mother Sophia, his wife, and his mistresses, rushes off tangentially in streams of technical display characteristic of the group around Joyce, but it invariably keeps to the dilute and echoed sound of Chaucer, Sterne and the King James Version. It is bloated, in the Joyce-out-of-Rabelais manner, by endless catalogues of objects; its people are pressed thinner than paper between the listed contents of their clothes-presses, their mantelshelves and their outhouses. Miss Barnes sweeps the scraps together with a strong arm and a long wind: they remain, unaffected by this vigor, litter from exemplars. The book's bawdry becomes a kind of kickshaw thrown in with the rest, to no purpose because borrowed.

"Ryder" is a tragedy of women; Miss Barnes has chosen to write it down with the rough bluster of a masculine approach. Ryder himself is hardly a picaresque figure: his range is as limited as that of a barnyard cock. His mother, Amelia and Kate, are far more ripe and robust upon the page, whenever the fashionable roar of Middle English, the erratic Shandean laughter recede for a moment and allow them to emerge at all. The mendicant Sophia, the sprawl of half-brothers and sisters at Storm-King-on-Hudson, Molly Dance and her bitches, Dr. O'Connor and Julie are potential live figures lost in a tangle of lambrequins and chamber-pots.

Miss Barnes, although here she has gone rather high and wide, is extremely capable of herself. She is richly and authentically gifted: "A Book" and some of the less derived passages of "Ryder" are witness to her power. If she were to listen to herself she could not for a long time mistake the technical article of apparel for the true tissue of creation.

L. B.

The Strange Case of Miss Annie Spragg, by Louis Bromfield. New York: Frederick A. Stokes and Company. $2.50.

LOUIS BROMFIELD has "come back," after the regrettable episode of "The Good Woman," with the best religious mystery story this reviewer has ever read. His form—reform, if one likes—is that so brilliantly employed by Thornton Wilder—a running pattern of interlacing narratives covering half the world in space and fifty years in time, and centering about the discovery of the "stigmata" scars upon the body of Miss Annie Spragg, an eccentric spinster who has died in poverty and loneliness in a small Italian town. Other residents of Brinoë, principally English or American, are presented through their connection with, or interest in, the "miracle," and their

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stories—introduced almost as interruptions—in turn absorb the reader's sympathy. So strongly do certain personages and situations clutch at attention that the writer's achievement in subordinating them to the main theme is seen to be one of extraordinary literary control. The legend of characters "getting out of hand" and running away with the author's intentions for the story is perceived in this case to be an actual possibility. There is a real risk of confusion in the claims of so many vigorous dramas to predominant interest.

Mr. Bromfield's psychological penetration and emotional insight are employed with consummate skill. The combination of sinister religious influences—the darker side of mysticism, from the fertility cults of antiquity and the erotic neurasthenia of the Middle Ages to the hysteria of modern revivalism—with intense dramatic situations developed as the writer's piercing emotional perception enters the lives he delineates, makes for concentration of interest in the complicated design. Emotional recognition and sympathetic response are stimulated to an amazingly consistent degree in view of—perhaps because of—the interrupted course of the story, which surrounds the mystery of religious emotionalism as a complicated decorative composition might encircle some secret shrine. D. B. W.

Race, A Novel of Marriage, by Mary Grace Ashton. New York: Frederick A. Stokes and Company. $2.50.

A FIRST novel, "never published in any periodical," by a young woman of eighteen. It is remarkable that one so young has observed so precisely the conflicts of Jew and Christian in matrimony. A clever if rather disagreeable and unsympathetic picture of Jewish interiors in London. R. H.

Day of Fortune, by Norman Matson. New York: The Century Company. $2.50.

A EUROPEAN manner, largely impressionistic and episodic, applied to Europeans of the second and third generation in the United States. Although without definite plan or definite final impression, "Day of Fortune," as a first novel, has distinct merit, and in at least one case, that of the mother (second generation) presents a coherent and appealing character. But if Peter (third generation) is offered as the best that American veneer can do to immigrant stock, it is a sorry picture. R. H.

Contributors

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